

Presidency Flash

Paris, 11th March 2022

State of play of negotiations following interinstitutional exchanges of views with the European Parliament and the Commission on the proposal for a SAIO (*Statistics on Agricultural Inputs and Outputs*) Regulation, with a view to the Council Statistics Working Party on 16 March 2022

Dear colleagues,

With this flash we would like to report back to you on the state of play of the negotiations with the European Parliament and to consult you on possible draft compromises in this context. Since the beginning of the year, we have held 4 technical meetings and a first political trilogue on Thursday 3 February. We have chosen to conduct these negotiations by block (grouping provisions by subject) and not by line. The aim is to be able to deal with each of the subjects as a whole, including the elements of the annex. At our meeting of the Council Statistics Working Party on 16 March, we would like to discuss the following topics with you, without discussing each of these topics in the light of the amendments introduced by the Parliament and/or the Council:

1. **The scope of the SAIO Regulation** (block 2), and in particular Parliament's wish to extend this scope to statistics on biocides, veterinary medicinal products and certain medicated feed. Parliament's strong expectations to enrich the already very rich range of agricultural statistics in the context of monitoring the new Common Agricultural Policy, the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies led the Presidency to recall the technical, financial and legal constraints faced by the statistical services. In view of the numerous legislative acts surrounding the SAIO Regulation, the Presidency asked the Parliament and the Commission to understand, as closely as possible, the list of requirements that should be covered by this statistical regulation. This included checking whether these new requirements were already met by other EU legislation and/or agreements between the Member States and the services of the European Commission (the European Medicines Agency for veterinary medicinal products). The Presidency pointed out that extending the scope of the SAIO Regulation to include biocides was not appropriate because there was no knowledge of the production of statistics on biocides and these did not fall within the scope of agricultural activity. This thematic extension on statistics on biocides, veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed, which was not included in the Commission's initial proposal for the SAIO Regulation, certainly deserves to share our analysis and views with you.
2. **Monitoring of organic farming** (block 1). Parliament hoped that the share of organic farming as opposed to conventional farming could be analysed in all the domains covered by the SAIO Regulation. In order to achieve this, Parliament would like to add a 5th domain to the thematic architecture of the SAIO Regulation in order to give high visibility to organic farming in all its components. Conversely, the Council and the Commission intend to address this issue by proposing a breakdown between organic and conventional farming, which would be integrated into the domains and certain detailed topics. For the monitoring of organic farming in agricultural production, discussions have been constructive, allowing the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council Presidency to hear about the various possibilities for

understanding the monitoring of organic production. These would allow a distinction to be made between organic and conventional farming for each of the production sectors where organic farming is already significant (e.g.: arable crop production, horticultural production, milk production, etc.). That distinction cannot be exhaustive in view of the still marginal nature of organic farming for certain crop or animal production. Beyond production, emphasis was placed on the need to better monitor the prices of organic farming, and the inputs that could be used in organic farming, in particular with regard to plant protection products. The adaptation of the statistical monitoring framework for organic farming in line with the development of organic farming in the Union has also been at the heart of the discussions on organic farming.

3. **Production of statistics on the uses of plant protection products** (block 2). This topic was one of the issues strongly discussed in the Council Working Party on Statistics. The position taken by the Council in its mandate is far from the expectations of the Parliament and the Commission as regards the frequency of transmission of these statistics. A long-term solution could involve the exploitation of new data sources. To achieve this, data from registers held by farmers should be made accessible to statisticians. The Presidency drew attention to the need to develop European legislation on pesticides and not just statistical legislation, in order to produce uniform and high-quality annual statistics on the use of plant protection products in agriculture. However, given the deadlines of the Farm to Fork Strategy (2030), intermediate and *ad hoc* solutions to meet these data requirements may have to be explored.
4. **Overview of the technical points on which a provisional compromise emerges** on the amendments introduced by the Council and the Parliament respectively as regards blocks 1 and 2 of the SAIO Regulation. During the discussions with the Parliament, a drafting compromise on the most technical points of blocks 1 and 2 could be established. This covers the following list of items: rebasing of agricultural prices (line 144b), frequency of transmission of data on agricultural land rents (Annex), first reference year and frequency of transmission of statistics on non-mineral fertilisers (row 144a and annex), quality of administrative data sources based on national regulatory provisions (row 135), safeguard clauses against an increase in the overall coverage rate (rows 76 and 76a), minimum deadlines for data transmission (Annex), etc.

The start of the negotiations proved to be encouraging, but also showed that significant efforts will be needed on both sides in order to reach a balanced and realistic agreement. We will take advantage of this meeting of the Council Statistics Working Party, to inform you about the progress of discussions, blocking points and exploring options. The Presidency wishes to involve you in order to reflect collectively on how we can change our mandate and lead to a text acceptable to all. We hope that these fruitful discussions will allow progress to be made in the search for a compromise, in particular with a view to a 2nd political trilogue scheduled for 24 March.

Looking eagerly forward to our meetings,

The French Presidency Team of the CWPS

<https://eu2022.insee.fr/>

Attachments:

- SAIO Regulation negotiation blocks;
- Link to the open letter from 79 organisations on the reform of the European Union of pesticide statistics: <https://www.eureau.org/resources/publications/extra-reading/6333-open-letter-from-79-organisations-on-the-eu-reform-of-pesticides-statistics-25-02-2022/file>