



Definition of GAEC

- Minimum standards define by MS in the framework established in the Regulation ensuring that all agricultural area is maintained in good agricultural and environmental condition
- The definition of these minimum standards by MS shall take into account the specific characteristics of the areas concerned, including soil and climatic condition, existing farming systems, land use, crop rotation, farming practices and farming structures
- MS shall not define extra minimum requirements which are not related to one of the standards established in the GAEC framework

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Previous GAEC framework		
Issue	Compulsory standards	Optional standards
Soil erosion: <i>Protect soil through appropriate measures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum soil cover Minimum land management reflecting site specific conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain terraces
Soil organic matter: <i>Maintain soil organic matter levels through appropriate practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arable stubble management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for crop rotations
Soil structure: <i>Maintain soil structure through appropriate measures</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate machinery use
Minimum level of maintenance: <i>Ensure a minimum level of maintenance and avoid the deterioration of habitats</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of landscape features, including, where appropriate, hedges, ponds, ditches trees in line, in group or isolated and field margins Avoiding the encroachment of unwanted vegetation on agricultural land Protection of permanent pasture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum livestock stocking rates or/and appropriate regimes Establishment and/or retention of habitats Prohibition of the grubbing up of olive trees Maintenance of olive groves and vines in good vegetative condition
Protection and management of water: <i>Protect water against pollution and runoff, and manage the use of water</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of buffer strips along water courses (1) Where use of water for irrigation is subject to authorisation, compliance with authorisation procedures 	

X Withdrawn for consistency with the new eligibility criteria for DP on maintenance of the land
 X Withdrawn due to weak rationale and risk of overlapping
 X Merged for internal consistency

(1) Note: The GAEC buffer strips must respect, both within and outside vulnerable zones, at least the requirements relating to the conditions for land application of fertiliser near water courses, to be applied in accordance with the Nitrates action programmes of Member States.

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Future GAEC framework from 2015 onwards		
Area	Main Issue	Requirements and standards
Environmental climate change, agricultural condition of land	GAEC 3	Protection of ground water against pollution: prohibition of direct discharge into groundwater and measures to prevent indirect pollution of groundwater through discharge on the ground and percolation through the soil of dangerous substances, as listed in the Annex to Directive 80/68/EEC in its version in force on the last day of its validity, as far as it relates to agricultural activity SNM 1 Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1) Articles 4 and 5
	GAEC 6	Maintenance of soil organic matter level through appropriate practices including ban on burning arable stubble, except for plant health reasons (2) SNM 2 Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7)
	Biodiversity	Retention of landscape features, including where appropriate, hedges, ponds, ditches, trees in line, in group or isolated, field margins and terraces, and including a ban on cutting hedges and trees during the bird breeding and rearing season and, as an option, measures for avoiding invasive plant species Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ L 126, 22.5.1992, p. 1)
	GAEC 7	This standard consists of 2 compulsory elements and 1 optional: - maintenance of LF - ban on cutting hedges and trees as an option, measures for avoiding invasive plant species Article 3(1), Article 3(2)(b), Article 4(1), (2) and (4)

Annex II of Regulation (UE) No 73/2009 – directive 80/68/EEC on ground water protection has been repealed since 23/12/2013
 The scope of this standard has been extended. MS may impose other appropriate practices than a ban on burning arable stubble to maintain soil organic matter

(1) The GAEC buffer strips must respect, both within and outside vulnerable zones, at least the requirements relating to the conditions for land application of fertiliser near water courses, to be applied in accordance with the Nitrates action programmes of Member States.
 (2) The requirement can be limited to a general ban on burning arable stubble, but a Member State may decide to prescribe further requirements.

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Thank you for your attention