

Title: A greener CAP? The ECA's work on greening.

Speaker: Michał Machowski

Organisation: European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Author: Michał Machowski

Greening, introduced in 2015, is meant to enhance the environmental performance of the CAP. It is the only direct payment whose main stated objective is environmental. The question of how effective and efficient greening is (or can be expected to be) in meeting this objective has been very important for the ECA over the last two years.

As a first step, in the context of compliance testing for the 2016 Annual Report, the ECA undertook to estimate the extent to which greening resulted in changes in farming practices. The results show that changes related to the greening practices of crop diversification and EFAs were very limited. This is due to two factors: on the one hand, many farmers in the sample were exempted, on the other – many did not need to change anything because the greening requirements did not exceed their normal farming practice.

Following up on this work, the ECA examined the design and implementation of greening in more detail, with additional focus on the intervention logic for greening, the link between the amounts paid and the policy's delivery of environmental and climate-related objectives, the justification for the implementation choices made by Member States and the overlaps between greening and the CAP's other environmental instruments. The ECA is to publish its special report on greening in December 2017.