



How will the EU climate adaptation strategy affect EU agricultural policies?

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ABSTRACT

A key objective in the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change (COM (2013) 216 final) is to ensure mainstreaming of adaptation measures into European sectoral policies. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one such sectoral policy, which is prioritized in the strategy. The CAP will be reformed for the 2014-2020 period with the explicit objectives of strengthening the competitiveness and the sustainability of agriculture (EC). Climate change adaptation objectives are included in the proposal for a greening of the single payment scheme (2011/0280 (COD)). Also the proposal for the Rural Development Program specifically sets out climate change adaptation as an objective to which funding must contribute (2011/0282 (COD)). This paper therefore examines the most important challenges to adaptation in agriculture and analyses to what extent the reformed CAP will provide the tools to deal with the key vulnerabilities and adaptation needs. Specifically, the paper analyses the policy instruments available in the CAP and assesses their suitability for addressing climate change adaptation, given the knowledge available in the literature and policy analyses on effective adaptation measures. At the same time, the CAP and not least the Rural Development Program are to contribute to and integrate multiple policy objectives, including other environmental objectives as well as fostering innovation and ensuring viable rural areas. This raises the second and related question, which the paper will seek to address, as to the strength of the mainstreaming mandate laid out in the climate change adaptation strategy, particularly when policy objectives conflict or when they simply compete for attention. The paper is based on analysis of key EU climate adaptation and agricultural policy documents and compares the policy instruments and the institutional mechanisms laid out against the academic and policy relevant literatures on policy integration and coordination as well as on policy instruments.