

Brussels, 08 DEC. 2015
A (2015)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for your recent letter describing your deep concern about the plans of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to transfer 157 million EUR from the agri-environmental measure to support for areas facing natural and other handicaps under the ongoing modification of the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Poland.

First, we would like to reassure you that we attach a lot of importance to the Agri-environment measure of the Polish RDP which is an important tool for support of specific environmentally friendly land management in Poland. The support of the Natura 2000 Objectives is part of the environmental delivery under the RDP.

The Rural Development Programmes are implemented under the 'shared management' principle between the European Commission and the Member State. The Member State's Managing Authority implements all practical aspects of an RDP on the basis of a thorough follow-up process and supported by the detailed monitoring and evaluation data at its disposal. The decisions for modification of an RDP taken by the Managing Authority are submitted to the Monitoring Committee for opinion before sending them to the Commission for approval.

At the end of the eligibility period for the RDP 2007-2013, the Polish Managing Authority intends to adjust the programme to make best use of the remaining possibilities for implementation of various measures and, as a result, proposed on 30 September 2015 the final 2007-2013 RDP modification. The modification request signed by the Managing Authority and the Chairman of the 2007-2013 RDP Monitoring Committee proposes, inter alia, the transfer of 157 million EUR from the agri-environmental measure.

However, the Managing Authority includes in the request an assurance that the proposed reallocation of funds would not have any negative impact on achieving the environmental objectives foreseen in the RDP as equivalent funds would be transferred back to the Agri-environment-climate and Organic farming measures within the RDP 2014-2020. This transfer would partly cover the financing of so called continued commitments of the Agri-environmental program of the RDP 2007-2013 under the new Programme for 2014-2020.

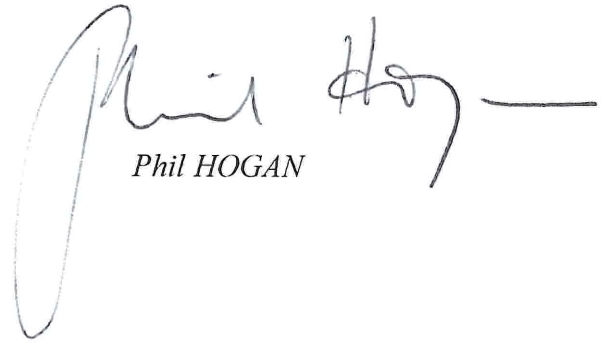
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As regards your proposal to allocate the transferred funds to the extended package 'Habitats and Birds outside Natura 2000' under the RDP 2014-2020, the Commission takes note of your analysis. Such a proposal could be considered in a future modification proposed to the European Commission by the Polish Managing Authority following internal discussions and the opinion of the Monitoring Committee for the RDP 2014-2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karmenu Vella', with a stylized, cursive script.

Karmenu VELLA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phil Hogan', with a large, sweeping initial 'P' and a horizontal line at the end.

Phil HOGAN