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Brussels, 20 June 2024
Ref. (2024)4823367

Dear Madame, Sir,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the General Assembly of the Association of Municipal Forests sent on 14 May 2024.

I have taken note of the many concerns you express as regards the implementation of the forestry measures in the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. My services are aware of the late start of measure 8 and the related sub-measures, as well as of the reductions in the budget allocated to the forestry measures. Based on the information provided by the Bulgarian authorities, the Commission understands that the reasons for these reductions are various, ranging from technical issues (e.g. a missing layer in the Geographic Information System which impedes the management of certain measures) to lack of sufficient demand during the calls for applications for other measures.

Although the Commission is not able to give any compensations for the funding lost in the previous programming period, I would like to assure you that my services will pay close attention on how interventions related to forestry are implemented in the CAP Strategic Plan and will insist on their early start.

Please note that since the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is implemented in shared management by the Commission and the Member States, the competent national authorities (Ministry of Agriculture and Food and State Fund Agriculture - Paying Agency) should be able to provide you with the most accurate information about the reasons for the financial corrections applied for measure 8.4, as well as about the changes to the Guidelines for measures 8.1 and 8.6 mentioned in your letter.

Finally, I would encourage the members of your association to actively use the Monitoring Committees for the Rural Development Programme and the CAP Strategic Plan to signal to the national authorities, other stakeholders and the European Commission at an early stage any concerns with the implementation of the interventions related to forestry.

Yours faithfully,

Janusz Wojciechowski

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Electronically signed on 20/06/2024 15:24 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121