

**Question for written answer E-015441/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Andrejs Mamikins (S&D)

Subject: Development of organic farming in regions with low soil fertility

The development and active popularisation of organic farming has for many years been one of the cornerstones of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Income support for farmers, rural development measures, support for the use of sustainable farming methods and market support are also among the most important aspects of this policy.

There are a good many regions in the EU where farming, especially livestock farming, has developed historically but whose competitiveness is now seriously limited because of market conditions, different rates of soil fertility and also CAP subsidies. The existence of these subsidies only reinforces the advantages of more fertile regions over other regions. Latgale in Latvia is one region where the soil fertility rating is quite commonly no more than 30.

1. At present, organic farmers are able to obtain state subsidies only if they keep at least 0.3 livestock units per hectare of land usable for farming. Will the Commission take measures to reduce this figure to 0.2 or even 0.15 for regions with a soil fertility rating of less than 40-50?
2. Will the Commission arrange for the soil fertility rating to be included in the formula for calculating the financial support applicable, and also change the conversion factor for sheep and cattle so that, for example, one lactating dairy cow corresponds to five, rather than seven, sheep?
3. What land amelioration support systems exist in the European Union and how can one apply directly to use such funds?