

**Question for written answer E-016115/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Milan Zver (PPE)

Subject: Agricultural subsidies for specific highlands and mountain areas

Haloze is a hilly part of Slovenia with marked variations in relief and very steep hillsides. Because of the specific natural features it is difficult to make a living from farming, and that is why farms and the cultural landscape are falling into decay, population density and biodiversity are declining, and farmland is becoming overgrown.

The relevant ministry has drawn up agri-environment measures for the years 2014 to 2020 and laid down standard conditions of eligibility for agricultural subsidies without, however, allowing for the particular nature of highlands or for established local farming practices.

As a result, smaller farms in less favoured regions – Haloze being one example – which practice organic farming cannot apply for grants, because they do not satisfy the conditions of eligibility (the average farm size, for instance, is 4.8 ha in Haloze, whereas a comparable agricultural area of at least 6 ha is required in order to apply for the assistance granted to young farmers) or else the conditions of eligibility, given the terms in which they are couched, do not allow for the specific type of farming (as regards the grazing/mowing regime, special production conditions, soil structures, and so forth). Precisely for these reasons, subsidies for organic farming have fallen by 50%.

In order to make for better targeting of support, is the Commission looking at the Member States' allocation arrangements, and are the aid provisions such as to ensure that small farms in less favoured regions have a real possibility of seeking assistance?