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Master's Thesis

**The challenges of greening the CAP: Analysis of
France's strategy in negotiations since 2009**

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DIPLOMA THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Kevin Douezy

European Agrarian Diplomacy

Thesis title

The challenges of greening the CAP : Analysis of France's strategy in negotiations since 2009

Objectives of thesis

The aim of this thesis is to collect, describe and analyse France's position during the CAP negotiations, and more specifically on greening issues. To do this, we will explain the importance of greening in order to understand its significance (financial and legislative) and its objectives within the CAP. Secondly, it will be important to analyse the internal factors that may impact the French position and to understand how the French position is formed. Furthermore, we will analyse the inter-institutional negotiations within the European legislative triangle to understand how France defends its interests for greening. Finally, it is important to examine how France, as the largest beneficiary of the CAP, is using European funds to respond to the greening of the CAP in its own country, following greater renationalisation of the CAP funds. The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to a gap in the analysis of this highly complex and nuanced subject. In fact, the demand for understanding this subject for future agrarian policymakers is very high.

Methodology

Qualitative research (including structured interviews), policy analysis, desk study and literature review, CAWI/ CATI method.

The proposed extent of the thesis

60 – 80 pages

Keywords

CAP, greening, diplomacy, policymaking, agriculture, France

Recommended information sources

- Arc. (2023, 25 septembre). French CAP Strategic Plan : EU sued over approval of the plan | Agricultural and Rural Convention. Agricultural and Rural Convention. <https://www.arc2020.eu/french-cap-strategic-plan-eu-sued-over-approval-of-the-plan/>
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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my master's thesis titled "The challenges of greening the CAP: Analysis of France's strategy in negotiations since 2009" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the master's thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on 31 March 2024

Kevin Gabriel Théophane Douezy

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The challenges of greening the CAP: Analysis of France's strategy in negotiations since 2009

Abstract

Despite the vast research of CAP negotiation, there has been no studies on France position on greening between 2009-2024. The literature review gives only a legislative overview of the antes-2009 procedure. This paper investigates the subject by analysing two semi-directive interviews and a data analysis of official sources and think tanks on the subject to recreate a coherent of the France position. The analysis of these interviews shows that France is regaining influence in the negotiations for the 2023-2027 CAP programme after the 2014-2020 one. France has been able to take advantage of the inclusion of the European Parliament as a stakeholder in the negotiations to defend its position. In addition, the greening of the CAP, based on positive externalities and public goods, is a legit tool in the face of the reduced consequences of its involvement. Finally, in view of the waves of enlargement and the greening of the CAP, the negotiation process focused on the financial issues of the MFF, rationalising the application of the CAP. The position of France remains centred on the net return and the possibility of supporting its diversified agriculture with coupled aids.

Keywords: CAP, greening, diplomacy, policymaking, agriculture, France

1. Table of content

1. Table of content	8
2. List of pictures, tables, graphs and abbreviations	10
2.1 List of tables	10
2.2 List of Figures	10
2.3 List of abbreviations	10
3. Introduction	12
4. Objectives and Methodology	15
4.1 Objectives	15
4.2 Methodology	15
4.3 Define sample	16
4.4 Interview guide	17
4.5 Analysing of documents	19
5. Literature Review	20
5.1 Historical evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy	20
5.2 The evolution of environmental considerations in the Common Agricultural Policy	23
5.3 Legislative decision-making processes of the Common Agricultural policy.....	26
6. Practical Part	30
6.1 Results of interviews	30
6.2 What is greening within the Common Agricultural Policy	35
6.2.1 Evolution of definition of greening	35
6.2.2 Budget allocation of the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP funds in France....	39

6.2.3 Principle of subsidiarity: nationalisation of the CAP.....	43
6.2.4 Nationalisation of the Common Agricultural Policy: implementation in France.....	45
6.3 France inside the European Union policy negotiation process	50
6.3.1 How France deploys its influence strategy.....	50
6.3.2 The CAP negotiations environment within the Council of the European Union	53
6.3.3 The CAP negotiations environment within the European Parliament.....	55
6.3.4 Analysing of the 2014-2020 CAP negotiations: positions, agreements and strategies	57
6.3.5 Analysing of the 2023-2027 CAP negotiations: positions, agreements and strategies	59
6.4 Position of France on greening	61
6.4.1 How France built its position on the greening.....	61
6.4.2 France's position on Greening in the Common Agricultural Policy	63
6.4.3 Failures of negotiation strategies.....	65
6.4.4 Successes of negotiation strategies.....	67
6.5 Developing solutions.....	68
7. Results and Discussion.....	73
7.1 Observations and processing.....	73
7.2 Evaluation and comments on results.....	74
8. Conclusion.....	76
9. References.....	78
10. Appendix.....	95

2. List of tables, figures and abbreviations

2.1 List of Tables

Table 1: Summary of interviews	30
Table 2: Final France PSN envelope after transfer	41
Table 3: Result indicators to be used for performance review	49

2.2 List of Figures

Figure 1: the CAP expenditures between 1980 and 2021 by categories	23
Figure 2: Lifecycle of a European legislative proposal	28
Figure 3: Comparison of the CAP 2014-2020 and NSP 2023-2027 funding.....	38
Figure 4: Trends in France returns under the 1st and 2nd pillars of the CAP between 2007 and 2017	42
Figure 5: France world rank among exporters and export market share (all agricultural and agri-food products).....	54
Figure 6: Comparison impact assessment, legislative proposal and adopted legislation on greening (CAP 2014-2020)	59

2.3 List of abbreviations

AECM	Agri-environmental and climate measures
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
ASP	Agency for Services and Payment
BPS	Basic Payment Scheme
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CMO	Common market organisation
CNDP	National Commission for Public Debate
Comagri	Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

CP	Commitment payment
DDTS	Departmental Directorates of Territories and the Sea
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGF	European Agricultural Guarantee Fund
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GAEC	Good agricultural and environmental conditions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSEA	General Secretariat for European Affairs
HEV	High Environmental Value
MEPs	Members of the European Parliament
MFJ	Multiannual Financial Framework
NSP	National Strategic Plan
PC	Payment credit
RDFAF	Regional Directorates of Food, Agriculture and Forestry
RDP	Rural Development Plan
RDPs	Rural development programs
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
SCA	Special Committee on Agriculture
SPS	Single Payment Scheme

3. Introduction

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is central to the European Union's construction, since its inception. This common policy helped to feed the population after the difficult post-war period, making it one of the most popular policies of the 1960s. As an exception the United Kingdom can be named, where the policy was not popular. Since 1973, the debates surrounding this policy have been memorised by the Europeans. On the 2nd of February 2024, blockades which closed off the capital Paris were lifted by French farmers, after two weeks of demonstrations. In its demands, the FNSEA, France's largest farmers' union, wrote: "In Europe, the highly philosophical Green Deal, which presupposes degrowth, must be reviewed to give farmers a clearer perspective"(FNSEA, 2024) and called for "an end to the inconsistencies of the Green Deal and ecological planning" (FNSEA, 2024). The CAP has become incomprehensible to both consumers and farmers. Furthermore, the competition for yield/productivity induced by the CAP has led to a drastic usage of inputs (fertilisers and pesticides), leading to an expanding destruction of nature. As an example, can be named, that since 1990, the populations of farmland birds and grassland butterflies have declined by more than 30%, according to the Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology (Luxembourg Institute of Science and Technology, 2015).

The CAP is part of the construction of the European Union (EU). It even accounted for up to 80% of the EU's expenses in the 1970s. It aims to: "support farmers and improve agricultural productivity, ensuring a stable supply of food at affordable prices; enable EU farmers to earn a reasonable living; contribute to the fight against climate change and to the sustainable management of natural resources; preserve rural areas and landscapes throughout the EU; keep the rural economy alive by promoting employment in agriculture, the agri-food industries and related sectors" (European Commission, accessed: 23 October 2023). Until today, the CAP continues being the largest expenditure within the EU budget (EUR 62.5 billion for the 27 Member States in 2021). France is the first country to receive the CAP funds, for example EUR 10.21 billion in 2021.

The EU is the first agrarian power in the world. The total value of agricultural production in the EU was EUR 418.0 billion at basic prices in 2019. France accounted for 18.55% of this production, followed by Germany (13.98%), Italy (13.73%), Spain (12.29%), Netherlands (6.99%), Poland (6.27%) and Romania (4.58%). Together, these seven

countries accounted for three-quarters of the European agricultural production. In 2021, extra-EU trade in agricultural products accounted for 8.1% of total extra-EU international trade in products. This is 0.8% lower than in 2020, due to an increase in trade in other goods following the resumption of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, the European agricultural trade balance was positive (EUR 46.9 billion), with EUR 150 billion in imports and EUR 196.9 billion in exports.

According to France's strategic plan for the CAP (European Commission, 2024a), the value of France agricultural production standing at EUR 72.9 billion, the highest within the EU. Agriculture is the third largest surplus sector of France, right behind the aeronautics and the chemical industry. The sector accounts for EUR 54.3 billion in exports and EUR 46.4 billion in imports (a surplus of EUR 8 billion). The wine sector has the highest production value, accounting for 13.2% of the sector's total value, followed by milk (13.1%), cereals (13%) and livestock (9.9%). According to the European Commission, agriculture and agriculture related activities employed 9.2 million people in Europe in 2019. This represents 4.4% of all jobs in the 27 Member States. In France, this percentage falls to 1.5% (708,170 farmers) of the population employed in the sector, spread across around 456,000 farms with an average surface area of 69 hectares. France is the most structured country in the EU, with 724 recognised producer organisations. For example, 80% of France's milk production is covered by a producer organisation (European Commission, 2024a). In 2016, the EU had 10.3 million farms, spreaded all over the member states, with an agricultural area of 156.7 million hectares, or around 38% of the EU's territory (8% for organic farming) in total. Spain (17.3%), Italy (15.7%), France (15.1%) and Germany (15.1%) have the highest proportion of organic farms (European Union, 2020).

This thesis will therefore explore a niche topic within the field of the CAP negotiations. Mr. Michel Rocard¹ saw the Council as a forum where priority was "given to the short-term requirements of national interests" (Bureau and Thoyer cited Rocard, 2018, p.16). According to this idea, the long-term interest of the environment cannot be well defended because of short-term national interests. In line with agricultural developments, the CAP has evolved over the years. The aim was to adapt the CAP to the changing economic

¹ Minister for Agriculture from 23 March 1983 to 4 April 1985, then Prime Minister from 10 May 1988 to 15 May 1991 (Fondation Jean Jaurès, Accessed: 7 March 2024)

circumstances and the demands as well as the needs of the public. Unlike a national policy, the CAP is a common policy developed jointly by 27 different countries. As a result, consensus is built through negotiation that navigate national interests. As France is the main stakeholder within this complex policy, it can be very useful to analyse its position towards the CAP negotiations for a better understanding of its motivation and role.

This thesis will attempt to answer the research question: How France defends its position on the greening of agriculture in the negotiations for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) since 2009?

4. Objectives and Methodology

4.1 Objectives

The main aim of this thesis is to observe how France builds its strategy for the negotiation and negotiates within the European institutions to defend its farmers. This thesis is to analyse the position of France on greening during the negotiations for the 2014-2020 CAP and 2023-2027 CAP.

It is essential to understand France's position on greening during the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP negotiations. Furthermore, it is interesting to see how the position of France was constructed to create an influential strategy on the European level and how the CAP aligns with ambitions of France. This study will help to better understand France's role in the negotiations of the CAP.

The CAP is the largest and most complex policy within the EU, involving the increasing number of the Member States. The ambition is to gain a better understanding of the negotiating dynamics involved in transforming policies of this scale.

Following the thesis aim it is expected to understand how the European negotiations led to decisions concerning the greening of this European policy to make it more sustainable.

Ultimately, the objective is to understand how decisions taken at the EU level impact the national level, particularly concerning the stakeholders directly. As the main beneficiary of the CAP, these decisions heavily affect France. Moreover, recent farmers protest throughout Europe pushed the subject of agriculture to the forefront, with the European elections being just around the corner.

As the subject of this study is insufficiently discussed in media or the literature, this analysis contributes to the current discussion about the greening of the CAP with a case of France.

4.2 Methodology

The methodology will be based on a qualitative approach. This is a meta-analysis of France's position on greening in the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP negotiations. The thesis

consists of two parts. Firstly, the literature review is presented to describe and examine the development of the CAP, the introduction of greening and the legal process of negotiating the CAP. This part is based on the review of relevant literature and EU primary sources, as it is important to understand the theoretical procedure and justification for the greening of the CAP. Secondly, the practical part is based on qualitative methods. It will rely on interviews with experts based on structured interviews (semi-directive) by CATI method modified by online communication (i.e. CAWI adaptation), the analysis of public policies, the documentary study and analysis of the literature. Complementary material was sent to the interviewees via email. They both communicated back via email too.

This method has two advantages: on the one hand it does enable a wide range of opinions concerning issue to be gathered from a variety of sources and can be based on documents dating back to the negotiations; on the other hand it enables people involved in the decision-making process at France national and European level to be interviewed and give a professional point of view of the situation.

4.3 Define sample

My expert panel is assembled of specialists in agricultural issues from France institutions. Their interviews helped to put the theoretical part in confrontation of their experiences to validate it. The questions were given to them in advance. It was important to include stakeholders involved in the situation under study: strategy development and implementation (Accard, 2020).

I interviewed Mr. Frédéric Michel who is delegate for Agricultural Affairs: Spokesman for the Special Committee on Agriculture CSA, CAP, CMO and rural development policy at Permanent Representation of France to the European Union. This position gives him a close-up view of the CAP negotiations and enables him to represent France in the Council of the European Union. I conducted an online interview on the 7th of November 2023, after prior appointment arrangements. The interview lasted for 26 minutes, and additional questions were later sent via email and addressed back. Mr. Michel granted a permission to quote him in this study.

Then, Mr. Christian Lafforgue has been interviewed. He is Deputy Head of the Common Agricultural Policy Sector (Agriculture - Food - Fisheries) within the General

Secretariat for European Affairs in France (GSEA). This institution is responsible, under the authority of the Prime Minister, for the interministerial coordination of European affairs, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the President of the Republic. I interviewed Mr. Christian Lafforgue online on the 30th of November 2023, for a duration of 28 minutes. He also provided permission for quoting him.

To be as accurate as possible, these interviews were conducted in French, recorded and summarised in English for the purpose of the analysis.

4.4 Interview guide

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method based on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework to experts. It is used as an exploratory tool to validate theories. The questions are prepared in advance but not asked in a strict order. This type of interview is flexible and results in comparable and reliable data (Tegan, 2023). In addition, the semi-structured interview leaves ample space for respondents to give their point of view. The interviewer's role is limited to rephrasing, asking for clarification and encouraging the respondent to speak.

As there is no way of knowing the nature of the negotiations apart from official communications, interviews enable us to find out the point of view of those involved in the decision-making process. Such interview format, unlike the analysis paper, allows greater freedom to develop, to clarify and to ask follow-up questions. A semi-structured interview is perfect to not ask leading questions or to make a participant uncomfortable.

The material collected from these two interviews helped me to develop a deeper knowledge on this topic. All information acquired enabled me to focus my research on the key aspects of greening, develop these ideas further and conceptualise the analysis. The same set of 10 questions was conducted in the two interviews.

It should be noted that individual experiences were taken into account when analysing the results. The place or role of the respondents in the process studied is different. Mr. Michel, as a member of the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union, was focused on diplomatic issues, while Mr. Lafforgue answered the same questions in a more legal and historical manner. This can be explained by the experience of respondents,

their identities, their cultures, their cultural capitals, the power at their disposal, their age, their sex, their seniority and their profession. A semi-structured interview is context related (Naz et al, 2022).

To consider ethical considerations, this master thesis is based on informed consent of the interviewees. This means that the interviewees gave their agreement on quotation and permission for publishing their names in this thesis. The interviewees saw the final thesis version before its submission to the Czech University of Life Sciences system on 31 March 2024. It is a form of authorisation and validation of their remarks.

Questions :

1. How does France define the greening in agriculture? Which documents are the official source of France greening definition and strategy?
2. Is it the same as the Commission's vision? How does French the greening vision align with the vision of the Commission?
3. What are the priorities of France for greening in agriculture?
4. What is France's strategy during the CAP negotiations?
5. Which countries are allied (or similar to extend) with France in the CAP negotiations?
6. Where and how did the greening negotiations take place?
7. What strategy does France use to deliver French greening priorities and convince the other EU member states?
8. Which were the most sensitive issues?
9. Do you think the EU adopted CAP budget is increasingly close to the vision defended by France?
10. Has France greening strategy in agriculture been consulted with any other agriculture stakeholders (e.g. farmers organisations, environmental NGOs, scientific institutes etc)?

4.5 Analysing of documents

There are several important official sources dealing with the CAP: the websites of the France Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, the European Commission and the European Parliament. As the three stakeholders in the institutional triangle, it is essential to analyse their perceptions of the negotiations and their definitions of the terms and issues. It is also interesting to analyse the negotiations a priori and a posteriori, by comparing the expectations of France with the results of the negotiations. Think tanks offer a neutral, in-depth analysis by experts. All sources, except books, can be found online.

The aim of carrying out a qualitative analysis (interviews and desk study) is to compare the responses to corroborate the facts and therefore the ability to write a complete report. After bringing together the results of the interviews and the analysis of think-tanks and official sources, the analysis plan was drawn up in agreement with my supervisor.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Historical evolution of the Common Agricultural Policy

In the Treaty of Rome, the six founding members (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Netherlands) agreed to extend the common market to agriculture. In addition, they agreed that "the operation and development of the common market in agricultural products shall be accompanied by the establishment of a common agricultural policy" (European Union, 2012).

The Stresa Conference, in July 1958, was set up under Article 37 (ex-Article 43) of the Treaty of Rome to compare national agricultural policies within the Community. During the conference, each Member State presented its expectations, needs and resources. The France representative, Mr. Houdet, Minister for Agriculture, defended the French-style agricultural organisation. Indeed, 80% of the population worked in agriculture in the French Union (4th Republic). He emphasised several points: the importance of the France agriculture diversity, particularly in the overseas territories and the interconnectivity between the economic dimension (fair wages) and the social dimension (family-based social structure of agriculture) of the future CAP. Roger Houdet called for an examination by product or group of products and for an harmonisation of "regulations on fraud prevention, sanitary and phytosanitary regulations, standardisation, designations of origin and the protection of certain rights relating to agricultural and fishery products" (Houdet, 1958, p.59). However, according to the France Minister of Agriculture, this development "must be carried out slowly and cautiously" (Houdet, 1958, p.61). In addition, Mr. Jean-Marie Séronie, agricultural engineer and accountant, explains that half of the German declaration was based on "very precise considerations on the conditions of competition, foreign trade and the importance, for his country, of foreign currency from exports" (Séronie, 2018, p.15).

In 1962, the CAP was born, with the following objectives: "to increase agricultural productivity; to ensure a fair standard of living for farmers; to guarantee security of supply; to stabilise markets; to establish a secure supply chain at reasonable prices; and to harmonise competition rules in all countries" (European Council, 2024).

From 30th June 1965 to 30th January 1966, the European Economic Community's decision-making body was paralysed by General de Gaulle's France, known as the "empty

chair policy" period. He refused to accept the extension of the role of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund responsible for implementing the CAP and the change from unanimity to majority rule in decision-making. De Gaulle suspended France's participation in meetings of the European Economic Community Council of Ministers, thus blocking all decision-making. The Luxembourg Compromise put an end to the institutional crisis by affirming the need for unanimous decision-making on important votes (Werner, 1966).

Then, the Mansholt Plan, also known as the “1980 Agricultural Programme” or the “Report of the Gaichel Group” was proposed by Sicco Mansholt, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, on 21 December 1968. This plan proposed optimising cultivated areas and merging farms to create larger units. However, over the years, the CAP's objectives and operation have changed, and although it has improved productivity and supply security, it was called into question in the 1970s. During the 1970s and early 1980s production far exceeded demand, leading to large surpluses. The mechanism implemented obliged the European Commission to intervene on the markets to maintain prices. In 1984, the EU introduced a system of quotas for products such as milk, to prevent them from being sold at excessively low prices, thereby safeguarding farmers' incomes (Ledroit, 2021). Quotas represent the maximum quantity of food that a farmer can produce. If this quantity was to be exceeded, taxes would be levied.

The MacSharry reform in 1992 marked the end of unlimited guaranteed prices. This reform transitioned the CAP from a market support system to direct income support for farmers, introduced co-financed voluntary agro-environmental measures and fallow land. At that time, the CAP still represented 50% of the EU budget (European Council, 2024).

Following the “Agenda 2000 proposals” concluded at the Berlin European council on 24 and 25 March 1999 (European Council, 1999), the European Commission proposed a reform of the CAP in June 2003 to integrate the decoupling – total or partial separation, depending on the options taken by the Member States – of direct aid payments from production volumes and introduced cross-compliance with environmental criterion (Milicevic, 2022). The new system is based on a single payment per farm, the amount of which is calculated per hectare. This reform was argued around environmental needs, aiming

to transfer all the CAP in the green box of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) without any restrictions² and re-legitimise the existence of this policy. In fact, according to the European Parliament, the “ultimate objective of aid decoupling was to ensure that it was included in the “green box” and ensure compatibility with WTO rules” (Milicevic, 2022). Product support schemes have transformed into producer support schemes, taking environmental considerations into account. At the European Council of 24 and 25 March 1999 (European Council, 1999), it was decided that the Member States would be required to comply with environmental conditions (cross-compliance) when granting aid, and that they would have the option of reducing aid in order to finance rural development measures (transfer between pillars). In addition, building on the conclusions of the 1996 Cork Conference (European Commission, 1996), there are plans to strengthen existing structural measures within a new rural development policy, now known as the “second pillar of the CAP”. The mid-term “Health Check” has become the most important reform of the CAP. Indeed, one of the aims of the June 2003 reform was to respond more effectively to new societal demands in terms of environmental protection and product quality, with public opinion having been disturbed by successive health crises (Milicevic, 2022).

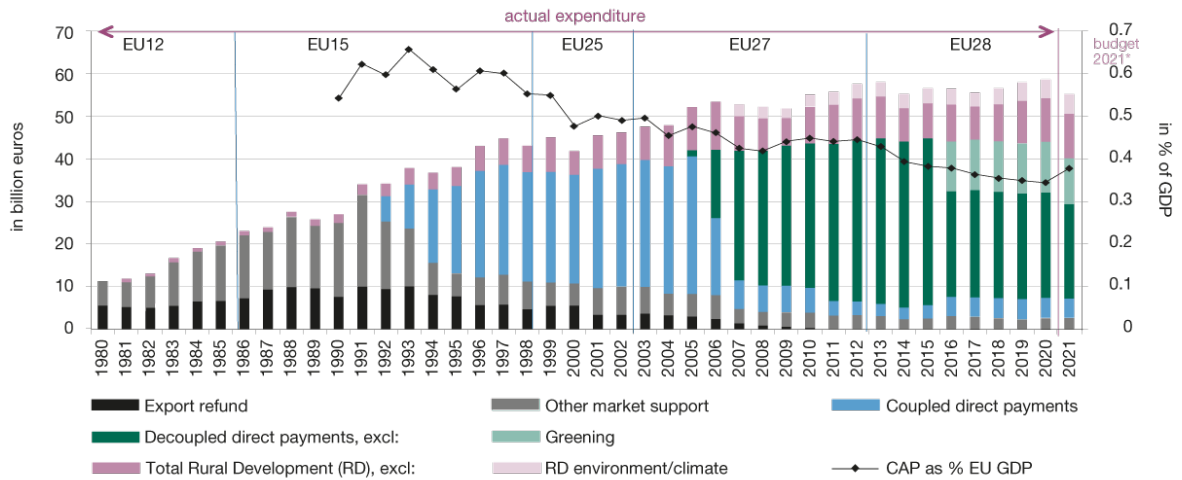
The “Health Check”³, approved by the Council on 20 November 2008, partially redirects funds from the first pillar towards rural development by increasing the rate of modulation of direct aid. Now the market is regulated as a single organisation, without production quotas and the limitation of intervention.

Figure 1 shows the evolution of aid, in billions of euros, and the share in percentage of the European GDP dedicated to the CAP Policy. The CAP budget as a percentage of the GDP has been decreasing, eventually reaching less than 0.4% of the GDP in 2021. In addition, export funds and other market support have been declining since 1991 in favour of coupled aid. Coupled aids have been declining in favour of decoupled direct payments since 2005. Those trends can be explained by the various reforms implemented by the European Union.

² Green Box contrary to Amber box is not targeted at particular products and not conditioned to current production levels or prices.

³ Qualified as the "CAP health check" by the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mariann Fischer Boel

Figure 1: the CAP expenditures between 1980 and 2021 by categories



Source : Kengyel, 2022

Regulation (EC) No 1290/2005 (article 2) established two European agricultural funds: the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). These two funds structure the CAP. On the one hand the EAGF accounts for almost 80% of the European CAP budget. It finances the first pillar and its resources are almost entirely devoted to direct payments since decoupling. The remaining funds cover the few market regulation measures that remain after two decades of market liberalisation (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018). On the other hand, the EAFRD, the financial arm of the second pillar created in 1999, finances “structural rural development measures designed to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors, the environment, land management, quality of life and the diversification of activities in rural areas” (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018, p.37). The co-financing principle of this tool is intended to create a lever to encourage the Member States to develop their own sustainable development policies. Finally, the impact of this has been that spending under the second pillar remains limited in countries with low budgetary resources (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018).

5.2 The evolution of environmental considerations in the Common Agricultural Policy

Historically, the agricultural sector has not been considered an economic sector like any other within the France economy. "Two core values historically have been important influences: that farmers have special interests and needs that cannot be met through normal

market arrangements and that agriculture makes a vital contribution to broader national interests and goals, such as food security, environmental sustainability and underpinning social cohesion in rural areas" (Greer and Hind, 2012, p.331). Indeed, for geographical, social, political, historical and cultural reasons, agriculture is considered as an exception.

During the 1980s, environmental concerns gained ground in European public opinion. Since the early 2000s, people have become aware of the impact of agriculture on climate change, for which it is both a cause and a solution (FAO, accessed: 21 February 2024). The numerous CAP reforms outlined above show that the environment has been increasingly taken into account in political decisions to subsidise agriculture: co-financed voluntary agro-environmental measures and fallow land, cross-compliance with environmental criterion, agro-environmental and climatic measures, rural development policy. First on diffuse pollution, such as nitrates or water quality, then on other environmental goods and recently on the climate (Guyomard, 2024).

Taking the environment into account within agricultural policies has mobilised various concepts: public goods, multifunctionality and ecosystem services (Kirsch, 2017, p.10).

The notion of public goods is analysed by the neoclassical economic theory. According to this theory, for certain goods, the market fails to satisfy demand optimally. These goods have two major characteristics, defined by economists Samuelson and Musgrave: non-rivalry (one agent's consumption of a service or resource has no impact on that of other agents) and non-exclusivity (one agent can enjoy the good or service without monetary compensation). These goods include biodiversity, air and landscapes in agriculture (Kirsch, 2017, p.11). The EU has relied on this concept since the 1980s. For example, the EC published a conceptual analysis of the environmental public goods produced by agriculture for the first time in 1997. The paper "Towards a Common Agricultural and Rural Policy for Europe (CARPE) n° 5 - 1997", known as the report Allan Buckwel 1, was a reference in the elaboration of the CAP in 2013 (Séronie, 2018).

The notion of multifunctionality in agriculture was introduced at the Rio Summit in 1992. There is no common definition of multifunctionality but according to the World Trade organisation (WTO), multifunctionality is the "idea that agriculture has many functions in

addition to producing food and fibre, e.g. environmental protection, landscape preservation, rural employment, food security, etc" (WTO, Accessed: 8 March 2024). It is the production of both commodities and non-commodities by agriculture.

Ecosystem services are "produced naturally by ecosystems and man must preserve their functioning, or even develop them to his advantage, pollination being one example" (Séronie, 2018, p.102).

The economic legitimacy of the CAP's environmental instruments is based on the fact that farmers contribute through their work to producing positive externalities and they should be rewarded for it. The British economist, Mr. Pigou, has theorised about externalities, explaining that an externality is "positive if the economic impact not taken into account by the market is positive, even if those who benefit from it have paid nothing to obtain it" (Védie, 2011, p.117). In other words, the social marginal product is greater than the private marginal product. A negative externality is the opposite of this logic. Europe is focusing on both, with the aim of reducing the negative externalities produced by agriculture (water pollution, ingestion of plant protection products by consumers, farmers' occupational illnesses, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation) and providing financial support for positive externalities (landscape management, "food security, the survival and vitality of all other sectors of the economy, rural communities and development, the environment and the social sphere" (COPA and COGECA, 2023) and carbon sequestration). For example, European standards promote "organic farming, which is supposed to create fewer negative externalities and more positive externalities than conventional farming" (Gren and Limburg, 2012).

In addition to economic factors, France is subject to pressure from groups defending sectoral interests. Mr. Jean-Christophe Bureau⁴ and Mrs. Sophie Thoyer⁵ analysed that the electoral representation system was favourable to rural regions. Agricultural interests are very present in the National Assembly and the Senate. In addition, the system of co-management between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food sovereignty and professionals makes it impossible to be certain if France is acting only to reduce market failures in the interests of society. In addition, agricultural production is subject to weather and disease

⁴ Professor of Economics at the University of Paris-Saclay

⁵ Professor of Agricultural and Environmental Economics at Montpellier SupAgro

risks, which leads farmers to be "risk averse", i.e. they prefer a certain income to the average of uncertain incomes (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018)

5.3 Legislative decision-making processes of the Common Agricultural policy

Since 2009 and the Treaty of Lisbon, three institutions have been playing a major role in the decision-making process of the CAP: the European Commission (EC), The Council of the European Union and the European Parliament (EP). Between 1962 and 2009, the EP only had a consultative role. The Treaty of Lisbon introduces the ordinary legislative procedure for the CAP negotiations, replacing the previously applicable consultation procedure (TFEU, 2012). This implies co-decision-making between the EP and the Council of the European Union.

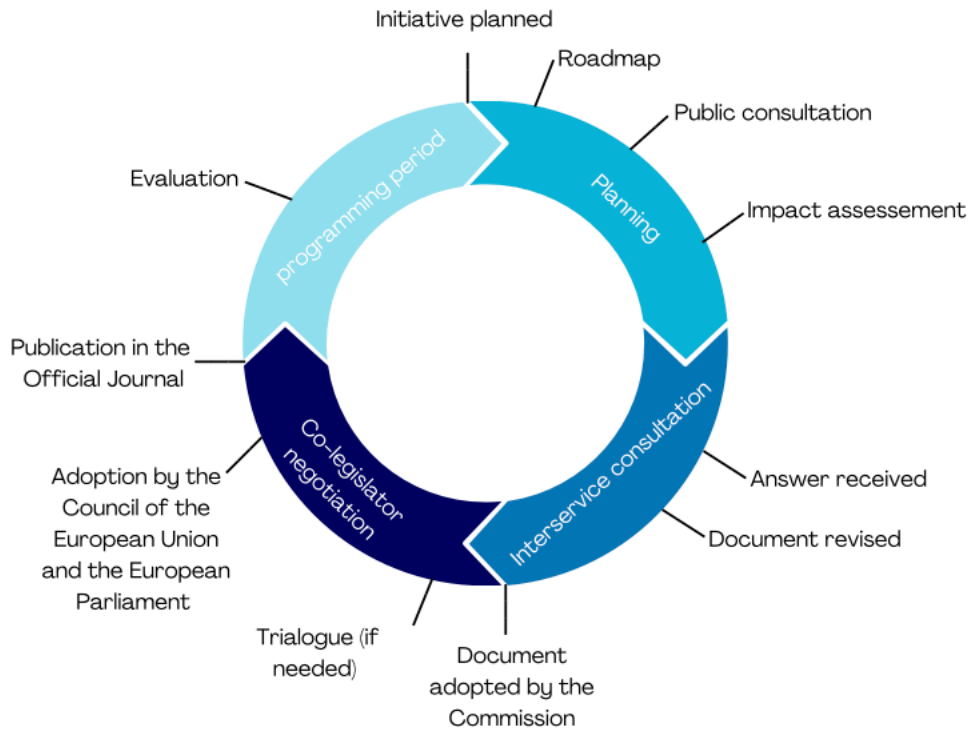
The second paragraph of Article 42 stipulates, concerning competition rules, that the “Council, on a proposal from the Commission, may authorise the granting of aid: (a) for the protection of enterprises handicapped by structural or natural conditions; (b) within the framework of economic development programs” (TFEU, 2012). In addition, Article 43 stipulates that “the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt measures on fixing prices, levies, aid and quantitative limitations” (TFEU, 2012).

After encountering problems with the interpretation of article 43(3), the Court's judgment in Case C-113/14 of 7 September 2016, Federal Republic of Germany v European Parliament, Council of the European Union, established a "broad interpretation" (European Parliament, 2023) of the concept of price fixing in Article 43(3) TFEU. As a result, Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, was annulled. The Court of Justice invited the Council of the European Union to adopt a new legislation alone.

Figure 2 explains the legislative procedure to reform the CAP. When the reform initiative is planned, a negotiation roadmap is presented. In a formal process, the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) drafts a proposal and amends it after extensive consultation with the Member States, the European Committee of the Regions and the various interested groups, from farming organisations to consumers

(European Commission, Accessed: 15 February 2023). This process is referred to as a public consultation. Following this, and the interservice consultation (ISC), the European Commission completes the report known as the “impact assessment” drawn up after the public consultation, demonstrating the advantages and disadvantages of policy options. The European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development presents the legal proposal to the College of Commissioners, who must adopt it under the principle of collegiality of the Commission (Jacqué, 2023). The text is then notified and sent to the co-legislators. If the text approved by the European Parliament differs from the Council's version, a conciliation procedure is set up, commonly known as "trialogue" (The President of the European Parliament, The President of the Council of the European Union and the President of the Commission of the European Communities, 2007). A trialogue can be organised at any stage of the co-legislator negotiation to address issues. The EC mediates between the parties during the meeting. The text is considered adopted when the Council, Parliament and Commission have reached an agreement. This may require several readings over a limited period of time. If the Parliament or the Council rejects the compromise text, or if there are three successive disagreements, the EC must propose a new text as the procedure cannot be concluded. Otherwise, the regulation is adopted by both legislators and published in the Official Journal with its date of entry into force (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018). Most of the Commission's draft implementing acts are subject to scrutiny by the European Parliament and the Council, in accordance with their “*droit de regard*”. The European Commission carries out evaluations of the implementation of the CAP during the programming period.

Figure 2: Lifecycle of a European legislative proposal



Source : Own presentation based on JACQUÉ, 2024

The three following paragraphs explain the role and internal processes of every stakeholder of the three central legislative institutions of the European Union.

The Council of the European Union is an emanation of the governments of the member states, whose primary concern is to defend the interests of their citizens and companies. The Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) is responsible for negotiating the CAP, with each Member State represented by at least one minister. The European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, or the European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, and the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development attend the meetings. These meetings are generally held monthly (AGRIFISH, 9 February 2024). The Council decides unanimously on the budget and by qualified majority (at least 55% of the Member States, representing at least 65% of the population of the Union) on the CAP (European Council, 2023). The CAP is prepared by the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA), which deals with issues relating to market policy, direct aid and rural development (Special Committee on Agriculture, 9 November 2017). This is a unique feature compared to other EU policies, which are prepared by the two formations of the

Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the European Union (COREPER I and COREPER II). The committee generally meets once a week. Other issues falling within the remit of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, such as food safety, veterinary and plant health issues, are dealt with by COREPER I. According to Bureau and Thoyer, the special case of game theory: "the restaurant game" (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018, p.17), expresses perfectly what happens in the Council of the European Union. In this analogy, individuals eating together choose their menu in the knowledge that the bill will be divided between them at the end of the meal. According to that, when negotiating Multiannual Financial Frameworks (MFF), the net return calculation is closely scrutinised by each state because "they see the CAP as a net budgetary benefit to their country" (Clasper and Thurston, 2010). In France, Ireland, Greece and Spain, the agricultural policy increases the budgetary yield. This explains the attachment of these countries to this sectoral policy (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018). According to Haug et al, "the opposition between net contributors and net beneficiaries and the growing emphasis on the concept of fair return have, step by step, transformed the negotiations on the multiannual financial framework into a confrontation of different national demands, resulting in various rebates and compensations, of which the Council's agreement on the current multiannual financial framework (2007-2013) is the culmination" (Haug et al, 2011, p.2). The Council of the European Union's accounting approach is not the most satisfactory from a collective point of view.

Since the ratification of the treaty of Lisbon, the EP possesses full co-decision power over the CAP and acts as co-legislator, increasing its influence in the decision-making process. Within the EP, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (Comagri) drafts its own version of the text. Parliament then has the power to amend and adopt it during a plenary session (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018). Inside the Parliament, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are not grouped by country, and therefore national interests, but by their political affinities within political groups (European Parliament, Accessed: 6 December 2023). In addition, MEPs are much more influenced by lobbyists (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018).

The EC has no decision-making power outside of technical points and delegated acts. Nevertheless, its influence as a political actor should not be overlooked (Séronie, 2018) as the EC is responsible for drafting legislative proposals and managing the CAP.

6. Practical Part

6.1 Results of interviews

The following Figure 3 compresses the results of the two interviews conducted with the field experts (see more: add chapter or section or page no. where you described this sample). For the purposes of information comparison and further analysis, the questions are designed in a form of table, referred as Table 1. For more information, the entire transcription of the interviews can be found in the Appendix (page 95).

Table 1: Summary of interviews

Question:	Mr. Frédéric Michel	Mr. Christian Lafforgue
<p>1.How does France define the greening in agriculture? Which documents are the official source of France greening definition and strategy?</p>	<p>It would be more accurate to use the word "agro-ecological transition" in the position of France.</p> <p>The position of France is based on national plans (ten) which are implemented at regional level. The strategy of France is to ensure that the various CAP tools can meet the objectives of this strategy.</p> <p>This has led to a three-tier architecture for the environment, with cross-compliance of aid, the eco-scheme and agri-environmental measures.</p>	<p>It has been defined in decrees and ministerial orders, but in line with European regulations. All the official documentation for the 2023-2027 CAP and eco-scheme: https://agriculture.gouv.fr/la-pac-2023-2027-en-un-coup-doeil.</p> <p>Between 2015 and 2022, farmers will have to comply with requirements under the green payment scheme, and this green architecture, will be</p>

		further strengthened with the reformed CAP 2023-2027.
2. Is it the same as the Commission's vision? How does French the greening vision align with the vision of the Commission?	The Commission has built up its position in particular through public consultations. As a result, the Commission's position reflects the views not only of the Member States (and therefore of France) but also of other stakeholders. There is no competition.	<p>The Commission greening vision is based on the Green deal and EU strategies: Farm to fork and Biodiversity. In France, it's all about practices, certifications and biodiversity-friendly elements.</p> <p>Read the strategic plan, regulation 2021_2115, of December 2, 2021, which accesses the national strategic plans and more specifically articles 16 and 31.</p> <p>The European Commission sets common rules within which the Member States create their green architecture, but takes care to set shared rules, as in terms of definitions and funding thresholds. For example, in the first few years, eco-scheme must account for at least 25% of total direct payments under the first pillar of the CAP. One new major feature of the reformed CAP 2023-2027 is the National</p>

		Strategic Pact, and the subsidiarity that goes with it.
3. What are the priorities of France for greening in agriculture?	https://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-plan-daction-global-pour-lagro-ecologie	France's concern was to respond to this three levelled challenge: environmental, economic and social, and this triple challenge is none other than the three dimensions of sustainability that appear in the prefaces and in the texts of the basic acts of the reformed CAP i.e. the strategic plan regulation, the horizontal regulation and the omnibus regulation.
4. What is France's strategy during the CAP negotiations?	France makes its positions and proposals known to the European Commission and the Member States (including the Presidency of the Council of the European Union) under the form of notes from the authorities of France. At the same time, the authorities of France make their positions and red lines known to the members of the European Parliament.	/
5. Which countries are allied (or similar to extend) with France in the	What distinguishes them is that they have agricultural structures that are relatively close to ours, but they are still 27 Member States with 27 very different characteristics.	/

<p>CAP negotiations?</p>	<p>Traditionally, we often have mutual positions with Spain, and relatively common positions with Italy and Ireland. When it comes to greening, we can rely on Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. But they have relatively different environmental characteristics. Trade policy is also a main factor during negotiations that can make it hard with certain countries like Sweden</p>	
<p>6. Where and how did the greening negotiations take place?</p>	<p>Greening negotiations is fully integrated into the CAP negotiations</p>	<p>France participates as a full member in all the negotiating bodies that discuss the CAP and the many issues raised by the CAP reform at all levels from Special Committee on Agriculture to COREPER and Agriculture and Fisheries Council</p>
<p>7. What strategy does France use to deliver French greening priorities and convince the other EU member states?</p>	<p>There are pre-negotiation and post-negotiation actions : influencing the Commission before the publication of the legislative proposal, influencing the other Member States, intervening within the Council as a member and creating a coalition.</p> <p>Given that Parliament is co-legislator, France is trying to ensure</p>	<p>It is through its diplomatic action/influence, the bilateral relations that it maintains with affinity countries, and on the basis of a non-paper: this is a document that is intended to establish the positions of a Member State and to bring the Member States on board, but once this non-paper has circulated in the capitals, it can</p>

	<p>that its ideas emerge in Parliament. For example : crisis management tools</p>	<p>become a communication/note from the authorities of France or a letter co-signed by several Member States, etc. France's means of defending general agricultural interests are numerous and diversified</p>
<p>8. Which were the most sensitive issues?</p>	<p>Reducing the use of pesticides : The Council is cautious</p> <p>Restoring nature: Parliament is cautious</p> <p>That's why it's really case by case and it's sometimes very complicated after an event to reconstruct a coherence in the positions of both institutions and countries.</p>	/
<p>9. Do you think the EU adopted CAP budget is increasingly close to the vision defended by France?</p>	<p>In the last CAP, France was the driving force, but in the long term, Germany is, with all the necessary nuances. The CAP is an ocean liner, and when it's set in one direction, it's very complicated to make it drag or turn.</p>	<p>France has managed to maintain the CAP budget for 2023-2027, more or less.</p>
<p>10. Has France greening strategy in agriculture been consulted with</p>	<p>Large-scale consultations were held throughout France, in particular with citizens' consultations (https://www.vie-publique.fr/consultations/282369-</p>	<p>European legislation requires the Member States to carry out a wide-ranging analysis and public consultation prior to drawing up their national</p>

any other agriculture stakeholders (e.g. farmers organisations, environmental NGOs, scientific institutes etc)?	<u>consultation-plan-strategique-de-la-france-future-pac-2023-2027</u>	strategic plans. In France, this consultation was the subject of a public debate to which the public, NGOs, OPAs, regions, ministries and individuals were invited.
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6.2 What is greening within the Common Agricultural Policy

6.2.1 Evolution of definition of greening

It is important to understand the measures constituting the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) greening within the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP periods regulations to understand the evolution between the two programs.

The term “greening” was used in the 2014-2020 programming period. This term is used in this paper as a reference term within which this thesis will analyse its evolution in the 2023-2027 CAP program. It should be understood as the desire to make agriculture more sustainable by maintaining a liveable environment and enabling economic and social development on a global scale without reducing the production capacity of future generations.

In the CAP 2014-2020, the European Commission has proposed to pay "particular attention to the joint provision of public and private goods" (European Commission, 2013). The aim is to reward farmers for the environmental public goods they provide (positive externality) and thus monetise a non-market value. According to the European Court of Auditors' 2017 report, the green payment "implements the principle that farmers should be rewarded for the public goods they provide and aims to improve the environmental performance of the CAP" (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p. 7).

The Figure 3 make a comparison of the CAP 2014-2020 and France NSP 2023-2027 funding.

Figure 3 shows that in this 2014-2020 program, the greening of agriculture was based on a three-tier architecture. Firstly, there is a cross-compliance obligation, in other words, a set of mandatory basic environmental requirements that must be met to benefit from the full CAP funding. This is a regulatory requirement in terms of management and good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC) for decoupled aid. Secondly, in 2015, the CAP introduced a new instrument in the first pillar, the "green payment". 30% of the national envelope would be paid in the form of direct aid to farmers who implement three compulsory farming practices: maintenance of permanent grassland⁶, ecological focus areas⁷ and crop diversification⁸ (Bourget, 2021). In many ways, the first pillar has marked a turning point towards greening. Thirdly, under the second pillar, European regulations stipulate that a minimum of 30% of the budget of each rural development program (RDPs) must be reserved for voluntary measures with a beneficial impact on the environment and climate. These include agri-environmental and climate measures (AECM), organic farming, areas subject to natural handicap, Natura 2000 areas and forestry measures. The program is based on two principles: subsidise farming practices that are beneficial to the environment and climate, by offsetting the costs incurred by this transformation, and to promote these practices through incentives. In addition, national and/or regional rural development programs (RDPs), which define the actions to be undertaken and the corresponding allocation of funds for a seven-year period, must include at least four of the EU's six common priorities. Consequently, priorities such as "restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems linked to agriculture and forestry" (European Commission, 2013) or "Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry" (European Commission, 2013) can be used.

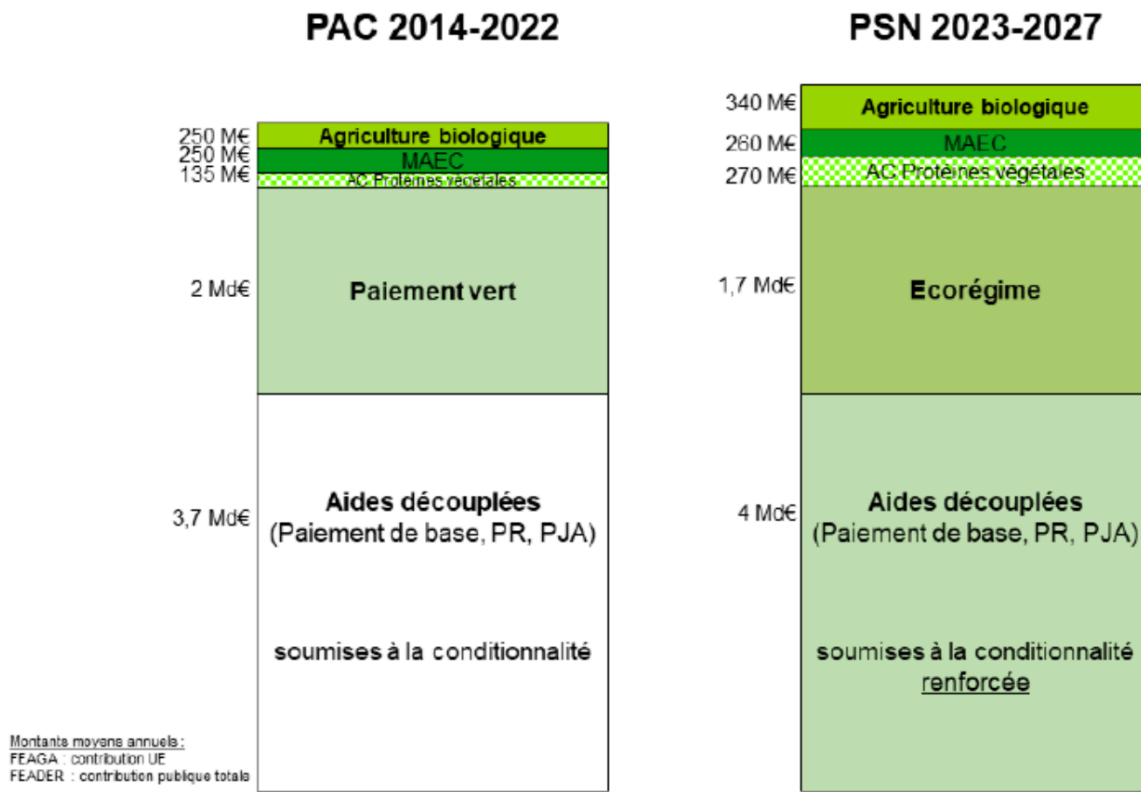
⁶ Farmers are not allowed to convert permanent grassland to arable land, except in certain defined circumstances. This is to preserve grasslands, which play an important role in carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation.

⁷ Farmers must set aside 5% part of their farmland for areas of ecological interest, which may include features such as crops dedicated to biodiversity, buffer strips along watercourses and areas of permanent pasture. The aim of this measure is to improve biodiversity and the quality of the environment.

⁸ Farmers must grow at least two additional different crops if they have more than 10 hectares of arable land. This measure is designed to promote crop rotation, thereby reducing the risk of disease and encouraging more sustainable use of the land.

The current programme (2023-2027) came into force on the first January 2023. As shown in the Figure 3 show, the eco-schemes replace the green payment of the 2014-2020 CAP and allow greater flexibility for the Member States through the National Strategic Plans (NSP). The eco-scheme represents 25% of the first pillar envelope. This represents 1.684 billion per year (Farm Europe, 2022). The criteria that were previously applied to the green payment will now be integrated into the cross-compliance (GAEC on “soil protection and quality” and the GAEC on “biodiversity and landscape”) and creation of GAEC 2 “Protection of wetlands and peat bogs”. It is called reinforced cross-compliance, as it is necessary to have 7% of ecological interest areas on arable land (on which 3% non-productive) or 4% non-productive ecological interest areas (5% in previous programming). In addition, a tougher threshold for switching to the authorisation system for turning over permanent grassland (from a 2% drop in regional ratio compared with 2.5% today) (Environmental Authority of France, 2021).

Figure 3: Comparison of the CAP 2014-2020 and NSP 2023-2027 funding



Source : Environmental Authority of France, 2021

The evolution of the CAP over the last thirty years has seen a gradual increase in the consideration given to the environment. Farmers are now required to comply with GAEC in order to receive direct aid under the first pillar and, more importantly, agri-environmental measures under the second pillar have evolved into agri-environmental and climatic measures (AECM).

However, according to the European Court of Auditors' 2017 report, "it is unlikely that greening, as currently implemented, will significantly improve the environmental and climatic performance of the CAP" (European Court of Auditors, 2017, p.6). The problem remains in the lack of targeting of the measures proposed to farmers, allowing them to make only marginal changes to their farming practices in order to benefit from the green payment.

According to Hervé Guyomard⁹, "the environmental ambition that was announced" (Guyomard, 2024) for the 2023-2027 CAP is not much stronger than it was in the 2014-2020 CAP. There are three main reasons for this: cross-compliance has not been significantly strengthened, especially after the introduction of exemptions in 2023 and 2024, weakening its scope (Commission Representation in France, 2024), the AECM don't see any increase in their budget compared to the previous CAP, and the eco-scheme is accessible to everyone.

6.2.2 Budget allocation of the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP funds in France

Within the framework of the CAP, the multiannual financial framework (MFF) represents the armed arm for financing the policies decided upon. Within this framework France advocated a consistent, constant budget that would ensure a net return.

Since its creation in 1962, the CAP has been the European Union's main point of expenditure. The CAP accounts for 37.8% of the MFF (DG AGRI, 2013) for the period 2014-2020 and 31.12% of the MFF in 2021-2017 (European Council, 2024), organised over a seven-year period. As a result, the CAP's share of the overall EU spending is decreasing. In addition, if we consider the Union's total expenditure, both through the MFF and Next Generation EU program, the CAP's share of the EU budget represents 19% of expenditure for the 2021-2027 MFF period (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2023).

This equates to a total amount of EUR 362.787 billion for 2014-2020, with EUR 277.851 billion in 2011 prices for the EAGF and EUR 84.936 billion in 2011 prices for the EAFRD (DG AGRI, 2013). Over the period 2021-2027, the MFF represents a budget of EUR 378.532 billion in 2021 prices for the CAP divided as follows: EUR 290.534 billion for the EAGF and EUR 87.998 billion for the EAFRD, plus an additional EUR 8.1 billion from the Next Generation EU Recovery Plan (Milicevic, 2023).

⁹ Director of Research at the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE)

France continues to be the primary beneficiary of the CAP's budget allocation, receiving more than 18% (EUR 66.2 billion in current terms for the period 2021-2027), followed by Spain with 12% and Germany with 11% (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2023, p.95). For example, this means that France received EUR 9,285.3 million for 2021, this means 17.1% of the CAP 2021 budget (Milicevic, 2023). In its appendix of the draft's budget law for 2023 on financial relations with the EU, the French Republic explains that "the allocation for the CAP 2021-2027 is EUR 6 billion higher than that of 2014-2020 (an increase of +1.6%). Compared to the initial proposal of the European Commission in May 2018, the budget for the CAP 2021-2027 has been increased by nearly EUR 22 billion (or +6%)". In the context of the European Council agreement of 21 July 2020, as confirmed by the interinstitutional agreement of 16 December 2020, on the MFF 2021-2027, the EAGF has been allocated EUR 291.1 billion in current euros, representing an increase of 1.9% compared to the ceilings of the 2014-2020 CAP framework" (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2023, p.95).

At the national level, it is possible to transfer aids between both funds. In the programming period 2014-2020, it was possible to transfer up to 15% of national allocations between the two pillars. France opted to transfer 3% of its first pillar allocation to rural development in 2014 and 3.3% annually from 2015 onwards (Bleunven and Piron, 2017). According to the table 2, in the framework of the 2021-2027 MFF, France continues this approach by transferring its credits from the EAGF to the EAFRD, amounting to "EUR 560 million for 2021 and EUR 540 million for 2022" (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2023, p.99). This transfer between pillars represents 7.1% in 2021 and 6.9% in 2022.

Table 2: Final France PSN envelope after transfer

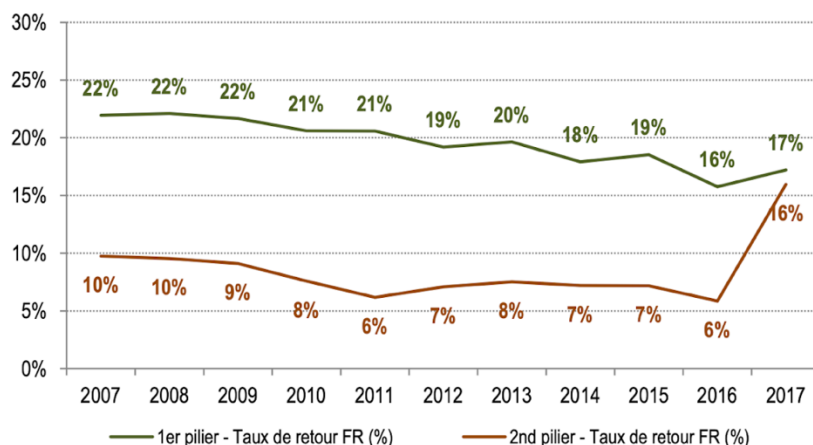
Millions € courants	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL 2021-2027
FEAGA	7 269	7 289	7 829	7 829	7 829	7 829	7 829	53 704
<i>dont paiements directs</i>	6 725	6 745	7 285	7 285	7 285	7 285	7 285	49 895
Feader	2 599	2 610	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	12 506
<i>dont CFP</i>	1 782	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	1 459	10 539
<i>dont Plan de relance</i>	256	610	-	-	-	-	-	867
<i>dont montants transférés</i>	560	540						1 100
Total PAC	9 868	9 899	9 289	9 289	9 289	9 289	9 289	66 210

Source: Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2023, p.99

The question of the 'budgetary return', but also of the Gross national income, is essential in France. The theory of Mr. James Clasper and Mr. Jack Thurston, explained in the literature review (see 5.3 Legislative decision-making processes of the Common Agricultural) concerning the net return of States is proven in the case of France. The majority of EU funds received by France are allocated to agriculture, rural development and nature protection. In 2022, the PAC funds represented a total of 56.2% of the aid received by France (Ledroit, 2024). The country has the highest EU allocation in these areas, totalling EUR 55 billion for the period 2014-2020. According to the France National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE), the CAP direct aid accounted for an average of 74% of farmers' income in 2019, with an average of EUR 30,000/year/farm (Chatellier, 2021). In a purely statistical process, France is the second largest contributor to the EU budget after Germany, having, for example, paid EUR 28.8 billion in 2021 (Commission Representation in France, accessed: 6 March 2024). Taking into account the funds received, the net contribution amounts to EUR 5.9 billion per year over the period 2014-2020, or around "EUR 88 per citizen per year"(Commission Representation in France, accessed: 29 February 2024). It is important to note that this purely accounting calculation has many limitations, since it does not quantify membership of the single market. France considers a priority to maintain the return of the CAP funds, in order to avoid bearing this expenditure from the national budget (Gault et al, 2015). The CAP budget is a key issue in the MFF political negotiations in Brussels in order to increase France's net return.

As shown in the Figure 4, France's rate of return under the first and second pillars between 2007 and 2017 has been decreasing. For example, the rate of return on the first pillar was 22% in 2007, falling to 17.9% in 2014. This translates into a 9.3% decrease in the value of the first pillar. For example, in 2014, France saw a “sharp fall in its returns in absolute terms of more than -EUR 500 million (EUR 8.5 billion in 2014 compared with EUR 9.1 billion in 2013, a fall of -5.9%) as well as in relative terms (15.5% in 2014 compared with 16.5% in 2013)” (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2016, p.102). At the same time, payments increased by +9.2% at EU level over the same period. While France remains the first beneficiary in terms of volume of first pillar aid (direct payments and market support mechanisms), expenditure induced by the accession of Romania and Bulgaria and the gradual increase in direct payments in the States that joined in May 2004 (external convergence) are contributed to reduce France's rate of net return (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2016). It is a relative convergence between countries. For example, Poland's overall return rate rose from 3.4% in 2008 to 7.5% in 2017, putting it in fifth place. The increase in 2017 is attributed to the "low level of expenditure incurred in 2016" (Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2019, p.109).

Figure 4: Trends in France returns under the 1st and 2nd pillars of the CAP between 2007 and 2017



Source : Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France, 2019

However, according to CAP EYE, the monitoring and training unit on the Common Agricultural Policy, "France's budget has seen an overall decrease of only 2% (9.1 billion in

2014 compared to 9.3 billion in 2013), which puts France in a much more favourable situation compared to the average trend of the old Member States, particularly Germany" (CAPeye, accessed: 27 February 2024).

A fundamental aspect to consider when analysing these budgets is the measurement yardstick. The MFF are not calculated in constant euros, but in real terms. Unlike the current euro, the real euro is corrected for the variation in prices in relation to a reference figure. In practical terms, this means a reduction in the European budget for the CAP over the long term. This technical mechanism enabled the 2014-2020 MFF to be adopted on 2 December 2013. In the end, all the countries are satisfied with this result: "France has managed to limit budget cuts for the CAP. The United-Kingdom sees the budget reduction as a "historic victory". Germany welcomes the conclusion and the budgetary rigour and welcomes the compromise on the CAP to reduce costs" (Gault et al, 2015). According to Alessandra Kirsch¹⁰, the CAP, budget has fallen by EUR 90 billion in constant euros over 20 years (Kirsch, 2024). According to Yves Madre¹¹, the end of the indexation of aid to inflation, in 2003, represents a 30% drop in the value of aid over 20 years (Madre, 2024).

6.2.3 Principle of subsidiarity: nationalisation of the CAP

Since the 1990s and the numerous reforms of the CAP, the principle of subsidiarity¹² has been applied to the CAP, allowing the common policy to be better adapted to geographical realities.

¹⁰ Agricultural engineer, PhD in agricultural economics, Managing Director of the Agriculture Strategies think tank

¹¹ General engineer of bridges, waterways and forests, former adviser to the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, economist with the Farm Europe think tank

¹² Article 5(3) of the TEU, there are three preconditions for intervention by Union institutions in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity: (a) the area concerned does not fall within the Union's exclusive competence (i.e. non-exclusive competence); (b) the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States (i.e. necessity); (c) the action can therefore, by reason of its scale or effects, be implemented more successfully by the Union (i.e. added value).

In the declaration signed by the leaders of the 27 member states, as well as by the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, known as the Declaration of Rome of 25 March 2017, agriculture or food are not mentioned (European Union, 2017). This shows that agriculture is becoming less and less important. First of all, it was initially a centralised policy, devoid of any provisions for the member states to assist their farmers. The aim was to avoid distortions of competition within Europe. The new reforms (1992, 1999, 2003) have given the Member States significant leeway to adapt the content and establish implementation procedures. This political evolution is the result of a complexification of the CAP, integrated environmental issues, rural development, as well as the various enlargements involving more diversified agricultural systems. The "*à la carte*" CAP was confirmed in the 2014 and 2023 reforms.

Thus, for the programming period 2014-2020, there are three mandatory support schemes, but national adjustments are possible: "adjustment of the calculation of basic payment rights (BPR) (Articles 21-40), derogatory regime for single area payment (SAPS), definition of beneficiaries of the CAP (Article 9) or conditions for granting 'green payments' (Articles 43-47). An optional set of measures adds further flexibility: (re)coupled support for certain productions (Articles 52-55), granting enhanced support to farmers in areas subject to natural constraints (Articles 48-49), implementation of a redistributive payment for small-sized farms (Articles 50-51), the possibility to propose a specific scheme for small farmers (Articles 61-65)" (Centre d'étude et de prospective, 2020).

The second pillar is entirely managed on a subsidiary basis, to finance the multifunctional aspects of agriculture. Based on a "common strategic framework broken down in 6 priorities," (Centre d'étude et de prospective, 2020), it offers a menu of more than a hundred measures, organised into 19 fields of action, from which competent authorities (national or regional) draw up a Rural Development Plan (RDP), validated by the European Commission (Centre d'étude et de prospective, 2020).

The 2023-2027 CAP extends the application of the subsidiarity principle, within the National Strategic Plan (NSP). This new tool enables each Member State to adapt the CAP to its own priorities and national specificity. "It was welcomed by the Member States in the Council of Agriculture Ministers, who will have more flexibility, but also greater

responsibility, in the development and implementation of their national strategy plans, as they will be judged on their results” (Bourget, 2021).

As interviewed Mr. Christian Lafforgue explains, “the European Commission establishes common rules within which the Member States define their green interventions and measures. However, it ensures that common rules are established, such as definitions and funding thresholds. Article 16 of Regulation 2021/2115 dated 2 December 2021, which focuses on National Strategic Plans, describes the types of interventions that the Member States must implement. Article 31 deals specifically with programs for climate, environment and animal welfare, establishing common rules for all 27 Member States to define their eco-schemes. For instance, at least 25% of the total direct payments from the first pillar of the CAP must be allocated to tools such as eco-schemes”. The common framework is made up of the two pillars, the eco-scheme and cross-compliance. Indeed, France is required to have its plan approved by the EC in accordance with the common European framework. If the Commission identifies aspects that are not aligned with the common framework, France must make changes accordingly.

6.2.4 Nationalisation of the Common Agricultural Policy: implementation in France

According to the flexibility provided by the principle of subsidiarity, it is interesting to look at the implementation of the CAP in France and its specific features in both programs.

In France, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France implements the CAP, supported by decentralised services: the RDFAF (Regional Directorates of Food, Agriculture and Forestry) at the regional level and the DDTS (Departmental Directorates of Territories and the Sea) at the departmental level. They are responsible for processing aid applications and conducting inspections. Implementation of the second pillar is shared between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France and the Regions. However, the Regions may decide to delegate part of the management, particularly the examination of applications, to decentralised government services. The main CAP paying agency in France is the Agency for Services and Payment (ASP), which pays farmers

coupled and decoupled aid under the first pillar, as well as rural development aid. France Agrimer is responsible for market support aid linked to the common market organisation of agricultural (CMO). France has chosen to regionalise the second pillar. The France Regions draw up their regional rural development programmes in line with the national framework for certain measures, such as compensatory allowances for natural handicaps, AECM and aid for setting up young farmers (CAPeye, accessed: 28 February 2024).

As part of the 2014-2020 programming period, France has gradually phased out the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and historical references. In 2015, they were replaced by Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), supplemented by a green payment. France complemented this system with a redistributive payment. Over the programming period, as part of the aid convergence mechanism, the value of BPS has changed to ensure that no farmer received less than 70% of the national average of BPS in 2019 (CAPeye, accessed: 28 February 2024) and targeted 85% in 2028. It is called internal convergence. France allocated budgets as follows: "BPS, greening (30%), coupled agricultural aid (15%, including supports plant proteins to develop forage autonomy for livestock), support for less-favoured areas (5%) and support for young farmers (1%)" (Bureau and Thoyer, February 2018, p.49). According to Mr. Jean-Christophe Bureau and Mrs. Sophie Thoyer, "these orientations result in a reallocation of the CAP aid to the detriment of large-scale crop farms and, more generally, to the detriment of agriculture in the North and the Paris Basin" (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018, p.49).

In a report commissioned by the European Commission in 2016, the France implementation of the CAP was defined as having a "clear focus on sustainable food production and coupled support"(Ecorys et al, 2016). It is described as "measures supporting production and productivity (coupled support, low internal convergence, historical calculation of Basic Payment scheme, extensive use of specific sectoral support) and less attention to environmental aspects" (Ecorys et al, 2016, p.344). This category also included Belgium, Croatia, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain.

France's Strategic Plan aligns with the European framework of the 2023-2027 CAP. It includes the implementation of policies for active farmers, the right to make mistakes and generational renewal. Under this plan, France allocates budgets as follows: "basic payment

scheme (48% of the direct aid), redistributive payment (maintained for the first 52 hectares, 10% of the envelope), additional payment for young farmers (1.7% of the envelope, 50% more than the previous programming), first pillar coupled aids (15% of the envelope¹³) and eco-schemes (25% of the envelope between 2023 and 2027, with the option to allocate only 20% in the first two years to initiate the transition)"(Lecocq, 2024). This program continues to support the development of plant proteins by increasing the budget for this measure by 70% compared to 2020 (DG AGRI, accessed: 21 October 2023).

Based on the principle of subsidiarity, the CAP 2023-2027 allows the Member States the possibility to adapt the common policy to the specificities of their territories. In France, there are three non-cumulative pathways that provide access to the eco-scheme: the practices pathway, the certification pathway and the pathway of elements favourable to biodiversity (Lecocq, 2024). Additionally, there is a "hedge" bonus. Furthermore, there are three levels of subsidy: standard (60€/hectare), higher (80€/hectare) and organic farming (110€/hectare) (Chambre d'agriculture, accessed: 23 September 2023). Within the second pillar, the NSP introduces agri-environmental and climate measures (AECM), known as flat-rate measures, meaning they are paid per farm and not per subscribed hectare. One such measure is the AECM for the transition of practices (result obligation), which includes a mandatory requirement to reduce pesticides by at least 30%, to improve the carbon footprint by at least 15% and to enhance the protein autonomy of livestock (CAPeye, accessed: 27 February 2024). As part of the NSP, objective number 2 aims to strengthen climate-friendly actions that contribute to the EU's environmental and climate objectives by combating climate change: protecting natural resources with a focus on sustainable development and preserving landscapes and biodiversity (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2023b). Concerning organic food, France has announced a target of 18% of its total agricultural area dedicated to organic farming by 2027. To achieve this, support for the conversion to organic farming is set at EUR 340 million per year (an increase of EUR 90 million compared to the previous program) (DG AGRI, Accessed: 21 October 2023).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France aimed to make the eco-scheme "inclusive and non-discriminatory, accessible to everyone and simple" (CAPeye,

¹³ This type of support primarily targets the livestock, protein crops and mixed farming sectors.

accessed: 27 February 2024). According to the CAP Monitoring and Training Unit, the France Ministry opted for an eco-scheme that can be described as "wide and shallow"(CAPeye, accessed: 27 February 2024) meaning it is likely to enable almost all France farmers to access the standard level without completely changing their practices. The ministry's strategy is to change practices through a mass dynamic. A "deep and narrow" strategy would have favoured more targeted and demanding commitments. In Europe, only Denmark and Germany have implemented a more ambitious policy in terms of climate and environment, with a more restrictive eco-scheme (Guyomard, 2024). As a result of the strategy of France, "more than 88% of agricultural land will comply with good agricultural and environmental conditions" (DG AGRI, Accessed: 21 October 2023). According to a study published in *Économie Rurale*, "99.6% of farms in mainland France comply with the requirements of CE2+ certification and can therefore, via this channel, access the standard level of payment without changing their practices" (Lassalas, 2023), including 35.5% of which comply with the High Environmental Value (HEV) certification. Greening remains a production aid facing the "windfall effect", i.e. the possibility of obtaining funds for practices that have already been put in place without changing the methods used.

The aim, of 2023-2027 CAP, is to move away from means-based targets to results-based targets by improving performance. The Super-trilogue on 26 March 2021 concluded this agreement. It will be a biannual performance review (annual in the European Commission's proposition) with 22 result indicators subject to performance review (38 indicators in the European Commission's proposition). A tolerance margin of deviations is accepted in addition to a time (2 years) to adjust before encountering any suspension of payments. This new approach gives the Member States more time and more flexibility in performance reviews (Metta, 2021). Finally, to "avoid any suspension of payments in case of underperformance, the tolerance margins for deviations from the planned targets was increased up to 35% for the review in 2024 and maintained at 25% for the review in 2026. This agreement grants more flexibility to the Member States compared to the standard 25% proposed by the Commission for every financial year" (Metta, 2021). As shown in the table 3, regarding greening, Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the EP and of the Council dated 2 December 2021, sets a specific objective for the NSP : "to contribute to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to it, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing carbon sequestration and promoting renewable energies (SO4);

promoting sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources such as water, soil and air, including by reducing dependence on chemicals (SO5); contributing to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, improving ecosystem services, and preserving habitats and landscapes (SO6)” (European Union, 2013).

Table 3: Result indicators to be used for performance review

		Outcome super-trilogue 26/03/2021
	Cross cutting objective: modernisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.1: Enhancing performance through knowledge and innovation
Economic dimension	Specific objective (SO) 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.6: Redistribution to smaller farms • R.7: Enhancing support to farms in areas with specific needs
	SO 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.9: Farm modernisation
	SO 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.10: Better supply chain organisation
Clim/envi dimension	SO 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.13: Reducing emissions in the livestock sector • R.14: Carbon storage in soils and biomass • R.17: Afforested land
	SO 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.18: Improving and protecting soils • R.19: Improving air quality • R.20: Protecting water quality • R.21: Sustainable nutrient management • R.22: Sustainable water use
	SO 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.26: Supporting sustainable forest management • R.27: Preserving habitats and species • R.29: Preserving landscape features • R.39: Organic farming; Share of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) supported by the CAP for organic farming maintenance or conversion
Social dimension	SO 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.30: Generational renewal
	SO 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.34: Connecting rural Europe
	SO 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R.36: Limiting antimicrobial use • R.37: Sustainable and reduced use of pesticides • R.38: Improving animal welfare
Total		22

Source: Presidency of the Council of the European Union, 8 April 2021

On 31 March 2022, Brussels asked France to review its plan, arguing that its NSP lacked environmental ambition (Foucart, 2022). In his response of 22 April 2022, the France Minister of Agriculture, Julien Denormandie, maintained his position and even challenged the Commission's role in monitoring the application of the CAP, saying that some Commissioner's observations were "elements of appreciation falling within the realm of

expediency" (Denormandie, 2022). However, the Commission's position is confirmed by the considered opinion of the Environmental Authority on the NSP for the CAP 2023-2027, announcing that "the choice of the NSP for continuity of the financial balances between the two pillars, the absence of territorialization and the reference to the HVE scheme, for which the specifications are not yet finalised, show a failure to take into account at the appropriate level the environmental issues to which the NSP should have provided a robust and ambitious response, consistent with national and European commitments." (Environmental Authority of France, 2021, p.3). In Addition, the British NGO ClientEarth and a group of associations in France (Collectif Nourrir) lodged a complaint to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) against the EC on 17 July 2023 (Struna, 2023). The associations complain that the France NSP does not comply with minimum environmental standards required by the European CAP Regulation (Willard, 2023).

It should be noted that, in addition to the CAP budget, France co-finances the EAFRD and has set up funds to support agriculture of France at national level. For example, the system of exemption from employers' social security contributions for casual workers (TO-DE) has been extended for 3 years (until 31 December 2025), representing a budget of EUR 578 million in 2024. France is also co-financing crop insurance, with an annual budget of EUR 680 million. The various funds include appropriations for the agricultural and agrifood sectors (EUR 265 million in 2024), an allocation to deal with uncertainties (EUR 125 million in 2024), the Bio Fund of the Future (EUR 18 million with an additional EUR 5 million for communication in 2024) and appropriations for forestry policy (EUR 301 million in 2024). The agricultural and agri-food component of France 2030 amounts to nearly EUR 2.3 billion and EUR 600 million for the forestry component to boost the sector's competitiveness through strategic investment. Finally, there is the Sovereignty Plan for fruit and vegetables (EUR 200 million in 2023).

6.3 France inside the European Union policy negotiation process

6.3.1 How France deploys its influence strategy

As part of its policy to influence the CAP, France employs several diplomatic tools, structured around various periods.

Firstly, France aims to incorporate its vision of the CAP into the European Commission's working draft. To achieve this, it regularly communicates its priorities and proposals to the Commission through notes from the France authorities. If the Commission finds these proposals interesting, they can be incorporated in the legislative proposals. In this process, the appointment of the Commissioner for Agriculture, his cabinet and the members of DG AGRI is crucial. In 2023, DG AGRI had 847 employees, representing 2.6% of European civil servants, including 154 Belgians, 101 Italians, 86 Spanish, 67 Polish, 65 French, 48 Danish, 45 Hungarians and 40 Romanians (DG HR, 2023). As of 31 March 2024, the commissioner is Janusz Wojciechowski (Polish), the director-general is Wolfgang Burtscher (Austrian) and the deputy director-general is Mihail Dumitru (Romanian). In 2014, "the services favoured a conservative position and the College of Commissioners was divided on the desirability of maintaining a substantial budget for the CAP" (Gault et al, 2015, p.16), which led the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Ciolos, to organise a public consultation in 2010 to circumvent his services (Gault et al, 2015). It is important to highlight that negotiations are "inheriting a complex stratigraphy of reforms and regulations resulting from successive negotiations and compromises, gradually deposited in a whole that has now often become illegible" (Séronie, 2018). The Commission constructs its position by taking into account not only the viewpoints of the Member States (including France) but also those of the other stakeholders consulted during the public consultation.

According to Mr. Christian Lafforgue: "France's means of action to defend general agricultural interests are many and varied". The authorities of France communicate their stances during the monthly meetings of the Council of Agriculture Ministers, as well as in the meetings of the Committee of Experts in Brussels, at the level of the SCA and COREPER as a full member (see 5.3 Legislative decision-making processes of the Common Agricultural policy). The aim is to create alliances by soliciting the support of affinitive Member States. In addition, France is using its network of diplomats across Europe to spread its position in European capitals through "non-papers" drafted by authorities of France. A "non paper" is a document intended to present the positions of a Member State, which may become a communication/note from the authorities of France or a letter co-signed by several Member States if there's mutual agreement on the presented proposal. The aim is to forge compromises and consensus. For instance, on 14 September 2010, France and Germany

adopted a joint position: "A strong CAP beyond 2013" (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2010). Following the publication of the EC's legislative proposal, France informs the Presidency of the Council of the European Union about the compromise proposal to facilitate the adoption of a general approach and then an agreement at the end of the trialogue. The Presidential negotiating mandate is based on the compromise reached in discussions between the 27 countries. France brings its technical expertise to the Council. This is a task of agricultural diplomacy which is carried out by the France Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels in liaison with the GSEA. A concrete example is the major conference organised by France at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for European Ministers of Agriculture. The aim was to defend the position of France for the new reform (2014-2020) by involving stakeholders from France to provide testimony. At the same time, France is making its position and red lines known to the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

The co-decision procedure elevates the significance of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Member State chairs the Council for six months must represent the institution during the trialogue and advocate the position of the Member States in front of the EP. The France Presidency, from January to June 2022, did not prioritise agriculture due to an unfavourable schedule. It only provided an exchange of views on the NSP relating to the CAP following the political agreement on the reform of the CAP on 28 June 2021 and its application on 1 January 2023. With 27 Member States, the last France Presidency dates back to 2008, when the EU faced numerous crises: the Irish rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in a referendum, conflicts in the Georgian provinces and the financial crisis (Ledroit, 2022). The date of France's next presidency is not known, but it should not take place before 2030.

According to Mr. Frédéric Michel, the question of whether the CAP aligns more closely with the vision of France is highly complex. He describes the CAP as an "ocean liner". By using this comparison, Mr. Frédéric Michel wants to show that the CAP is a very complicated tool to slow down or change direction when it is put in one direction, like an ocean liner. The MFF can create a gap between the policy in place and political and geopolitical developments in the Member States. The question of whether France is still as influential in the CAP negotiations requires nuanced consideration.

6.3.2 The CAP negotiations environment within the Council of the European Union

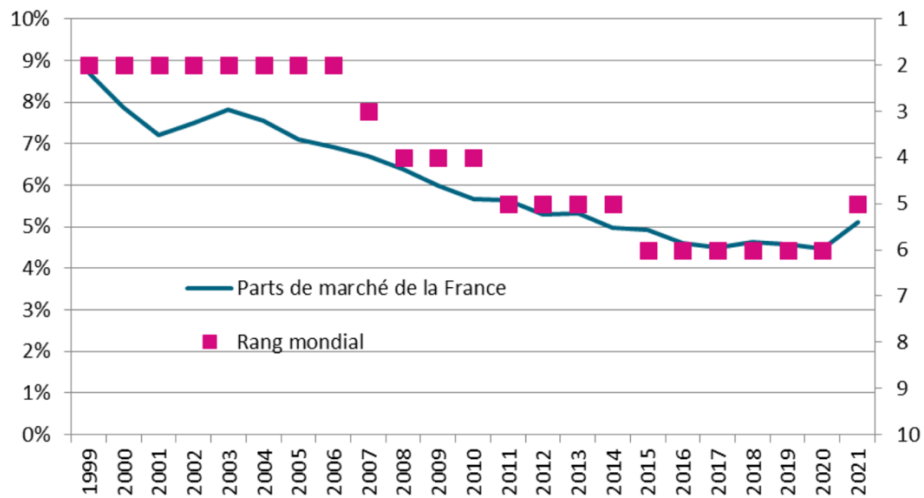
There are ongoing strategies within the Council of the European Union which influence the CAP negotiations. It is important to understand the environment in which France operates during negotiations in order to understand the issues at stake and the strategies employed.

Within the Council of the European Union, the structural differences among the 27 Member States mean that France does not have any guaranteed allies. Alliances shift based on the topic, because each Member State has different agricultural characteristics (varying farm sizes, different soil and climate conditions). This variability underlies the trend towards the nationalisation of the CAP (see 6.2.3 Principle of subsidiarity: nationalisation of the CAP). According to Mr. Frédéric Michel, "traditionally, we often have common positions with Spain, and relatively common positions with Italy and Ireland. When it comes to greening, we can rely on Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. But they have relatively different environmental characteristics".

As part of the CAP negotiations, the position of each country must be analysed according to their trade policy.

According to the Figure 5, on international markets, France is a major agricultural Stakeholder, being the world's 5th largest agricultural exporter and Europe's 3rd largest exporter and importer in 2021. Nevertheless, France has slipped down the rankings (from 2nd in the world in 1999 to 5th in 2021) and its market share (from 9% of the world market in 1999 to 5% in 2021). It can be explained by the fact that France exported nearly €70 billion in current terms in 2021, i.e. 1.8 times more than in 2000, while importing nearly EUR 63 billion of foodstuffs, i.e. 2.2 times more than in 2000 (Duplomb et al, 2022). For example, in 2019, 56% of sheepmeat consumed and 45% of chicken consumption were imported. This is due to the downward trend in the amount of agricultural land used, the reduction in the number of farmers in business, the general levelling off of yields and the emergence of global competition (Duplomb et al, 2022).

Figure 5: France world rank among exporters and export market share (all agricultural and agri-food products)



Source : Duplomb et al, 2022

Within the Council of the European Union, during the CAP negotiations, there are two divisions of the Member State: North/South and West/East.

Firstly, in terms of political logic, within the Council of the European Union, North countries want to reduce distorting international trade tools in accordance with liberal policy. For example, according to Mr. Frédéric Michel, "the Germans are strongly opposed to coupled aid for livestock farming". In this case, France "mobilises coupled aid to the maximum of the possibilities offered by the Community text, because it is a decisive tool for the orientation of production". Community text gives the possibility of 15% of total aid dedicated to coupled aid for 2023-2027 CAP period (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2023c). Indeed, France considers that in order to maintain production, a vector of positive externalities (maintaining biodiversity and reducing fire risks), coupled aid must be maintained to maintain livestock farming in certain specific cases. One example is the compensatory allowance for permanent natural handicaps, which enables sheep farming to be maintained in the Pyrenees and produce positive externalities for the landscape. France is an exporting country but adopts a nuanced position, within the framework of agri-environmental transition objectives. In 2003, for example, France fought against the decoupling of aid, "certain points of which were opposed by the countries that benefited most from the CAP, such as France and Spain" (Bureau and Thoyer, 2018, p.28).

In addition, the countries of the North see agriculture as an ordinary economic activity, managed as a business with a focus on health and nutrition. For example, the "very entrepreneurial and commercial vision of Dutch agriculture has never changed" (Séronie, 2018). In the South, the emphasis is on the gustatory and cultural aspects of food. Agriculture is therefore a sector that generates positive externalities that need to be protected (Séronie, 2018). With this in mind, the countries of the North have promoted a reduction in the CAP budget in the name of other strategic policies. For example, during the 2014-2020 post-CAP negotiations, Sweden and United-Kingdom, in a budget discipline, "argue that resources saved from pillar 1 should be spent on other priorities, such as tackling climate change" (Clasper and Thurston, 2010, p.7). It is important to keep in mind that speaking time in the Council of the European Union is divided equally between ministers (Séronie, 2018). In this way, North countries, more represented, have more time in this institution.

Secondly, the West/East division was very much in evidence during the negotiations for the 2014-2020 CAP. The "new" Member States (countries that joined the EU since 2004), led by Poland, called for a fairer CAP, with parity in the level of direct aid with the "old" Member States (countries that joined the EU before 2004). The two main contributors and beneficiaries of the CAP, Germany and France, have had difficulty in accepting this position, calling for a transition period (Gault et al, 2015). Indeed, the concern of the Eastern countries to match the level of subsidies of the old countries means an increase in the budget devoted to the Eastern countries, and this is perceived by the Western countries to be to their detriment.

6.3.3 The CAP negotiations environment within the European Parliament

It is important to analyse France's strategy towards the European Parliament (EP), given that it has become a co-legislator since the Treaty of Lisbon.

On 26 February 2024, as he was leaving the Council of Agriculture Ministers in Brussels, Mr. Marc Fesneau, the France Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty since 20 May 2022, announced that certain issues would be negotiated with his "colleagues" in the European Parliament, known as MEPs (Fesneau, 2024). The term is used by the Minister to refer to MEPs from the presidential party in France. This statement shows that France has embraced this new negotiating method. For the next legislature (2024-2029), 81 MEPs will

be French. The outcome of the European elections from 6 to 9 June 2024 will influence the next CAP negotiations.

France's influence in the negotiations is complemented by its influence in the EP. On several occasions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France has relied on the EP to obtain changes to decisions taken by the Council of the European Union. In this context, the appointment of the rapporteur and shadow rapporteurs is crucial. As part of the CAP 2014-2020 negotiations, the European Parliament's representatives were : Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D, Portugal) as rapporteur on the regulations on direct payments and rural development, Michel Dantin (EPP, France) as rapporteur on the regulation on the common organisation of the markets (CMO regulation), Giovanni La Via (EPP, Italy) as rapporteur on the regulation on financing, management and supervision and Paolo De Castro (S&D, Italy) as chairman of the AGRI committee (European Parliament, 20 November 2013). It should be noted that the representatives of the European Parliament came from countries in the South. This was an important factor in ensuring that positions of France were taken into account. For the 2023-2027 programming period, the representatives of the European Parliament's AGRI Committee were: Eric Andrieu (S&D, France) as rapporteur for the CMO regulation, Peter Jah (EPP, Germany) as rapporteur for the CAP strategic plans regulation, Ulrike Müller (ALDE, France) as rapporteur for the horizontal regulation and Norbert LINS (EPP, Germany) as chairman of the AGRI Committee (Dupont and Nègre, 2023; Nègre, 2023a; Nègre, 2023b). It should be noted that the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) has been granted associate committee status under Article 54 of the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure. The ENVI Committee has appointed rapporteurs for each legislative text. The personalities of the parliamentary rapporteurs, their orientations and their national origins count for a great deal.

In some cases, positions of France prosper better in the EP than in the Council of the European Union. As the Parliament is ultimately the co-legislator, France can influence Parliament's mandate in the event of a trilogue to defend its interest. One example is the reciprocity of standards on the use of antibiotics as growth promoters. Trade policy is an exclusive competence of the EC. Given that a majority of countries are liberal on this issue (see 6.3.2 CAP negotiations environment within the Council of the European Union), they do not want to create barriers to trade. Mr. Frédéric Michel explained that "MEPs are more sensitive because of their links with the consumer". MEPS are going to demand that products

imported from third countries comply with European standards in the same way as those produced in the European Union (close mirror). In this particular case, France is essentially relying on the EP to defend its position.

6.3.4 Analysing of the 2014-2020 CAP negotiations: positions, agreements and strategies

It is important to understand how the 2014-2020 CAP negotiations were conducted in order to analyse the position of the various players within the negotiations.

A public consultation was launched by Commissioner Ciolos at the beginning of 2010. The preparations for finalising the draft reform culminated in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 18 November 2010 (European Commission, 2010). In agreement with the Commissioner for the Environment, Commissioner Ciolos proposed to give to the environment a greater role in the objectives and resources of the CAP. The communication assessed three possible scenarios, which were the subject of impact studies (European Commission, 2011).

2011 was devoted to negotiations within the Council of the European Union and the EP. Parliament's position was developed in the "Deß report" adopted in June 2011. This report endorsed the principle of greening the CAP. The Parliament considered that "resource protection should be linked to the granting of direct payments in order to maximise the achievement of these environmental objectives without adding new administrative environmental constraints in the 1st pillar" (Deß, 2011) and rejected any "additional payments from the 1st pillar for additional administrative burdens" (Deß, 2011). Greening was to be achieved through the 2nd pillar. Parliament took up the idea of public goods, stating that "decoupled direct payments make it possible to provide public goods that are not available on the market or only at a disproportionately high price" (Deß, 2011). According to the Parliament, the 2014-2020 CAP budget should be maintained at its 2013 level.

The European Commission published its legislative proposal on 12 October 2011, at the same time as the impact studies for the three scenarios. The three objectives put forward

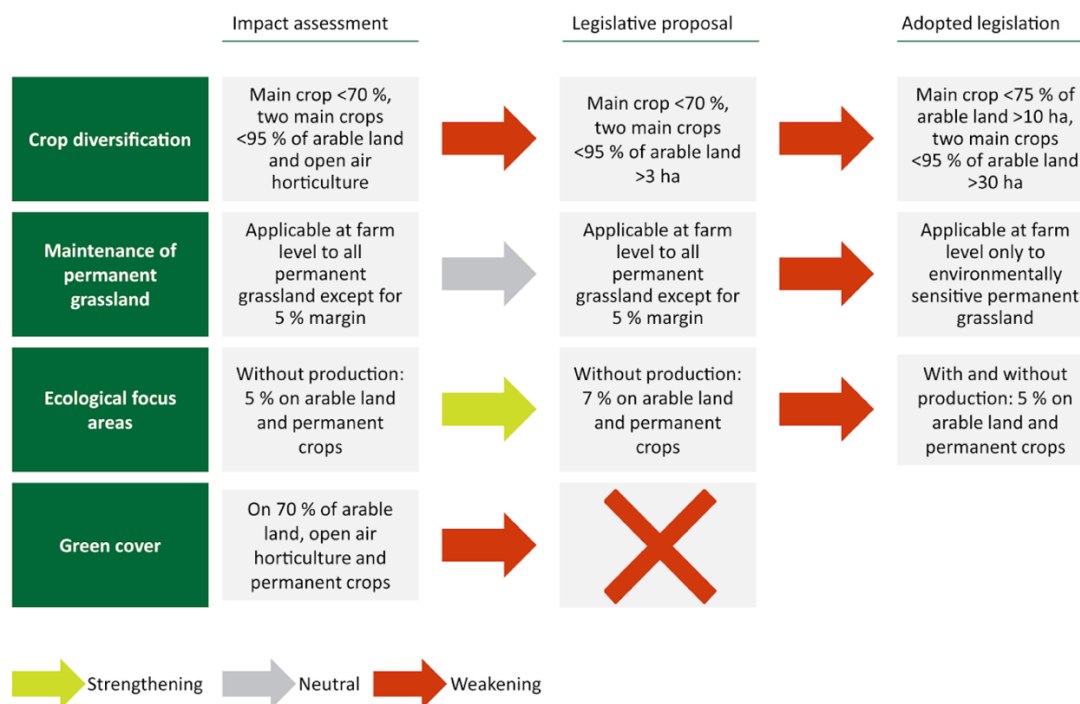
were: the sustainable management of resources, the effectiveness of the common agricultural policy and finally the competitiveness of the agricultural, agri-food and forestry sectors (Gault et al, 2015).

During the European Council's agreement of 8 February 2013, the 27 Heads of State and Governments of the Member States defined the overall MFF for 2014–2020 and funds allocated to the CAP.

The Council of the European Union, the EP and the EC went through more than three years of discussion and intensive negotiations. They agreed on a political agreement on reforming the CAP legislative texts on 26th of June 2013 (Erjavec and Erjavec, 2015).

Figure 6 shows the evolution of the CAP greening proposal between the impact assessment, the European Commission's legislative proposal and the adopted legislation after the Luxembourg trialogue on 26 June 2013. In the context of crop diversification, there is a reduction of the objectives from 70% to 75%, subject to arable land of more than 30ha. With reference to maintenance of permanent grassland, there is a reduction of the scope by referring about "sensitive permanent grassland" instead of "all permanent grassland except for 5% margin". The idea of green cover studied in the impact assessment was not retained by the European Commission.

Figure 6: Comparison impact assessment, legislative proposal and adopted legislation on greening (CAP 2014-2020)



Source : European Court of Auditors, 2017, p.19

6.3.5 Analysing of the 2023-2027 CAP negotiations: positions, agreements and strategies

After analysing the interaction between stakeholders for the 2014-2020 CAP negotiations, the same process is followed below for the 2023-2027 CAP negotiations.

The EC had published a communication in 2017 entitled "The Future of Food and Farming" (Ayet Puigarnau, 2017) setting out the main points of the Commission's vision for the CAP after 2020. On the first day of June 2018, the EC presented legislative proposals on the CAP reform and impact assessment (European Commission, 2018b). Within the Council of the European Union, two proposals have been put forward: the principle of subsidiarity and a reform of greening.

The two co-legislating institutions agreed on their respective positions in October 2020, allowing triilogue negotiations to begin. “The two drafts differed mainly regarding the minimum percentage of direct payments to be reserved for ecological programmes ("eco-schemes") in the Member States' strategic plans” (Bourget, 2021). The EP adopted the commission’s position of 30% for the eco-scheme, while the Council of the European Union defended a minimum of 20%. The EP supported the EC to making the capping of direct payments per farm and their degression compulsory. For the Council of the European Union, “Any reform on the distribution of payments might be excluded” (Metta, 2020). These two points of friction between the two institutions were resolved in the agreement of 25 June 2021 (Bourget, 2021). The result-oriented delivery model was debated in the 26 March 2021 triilogue (Metta, 2021).

The CAP reform for 2023-2027 is composed of three texts: regulation establishing rules on the CAP Strategic Plans; horizontal regulation establishing rules on financing, management and monitoring the CAP and regulation establishing rules on Common Market Organisation for agricultural products.

As part of the 2021-2027 MFF, the EC proposed, in addition to the increase of Gross national income, a 5% cut in the amounts allocated to so-called "traditional" policy, namely the CAP, to finance Europe's new ambitions (European Commission, 2018a). The EP wanted to increase by 1.3% the Gross national income to finance the EU's objectives. France representatives, for their part, have indicated that France wants to maintain a "constant" budget for the CAP (Ledroit, 2019).

The delay in the negotiations and the need for time to draw up NSP pushed the Council of the European Union and the EP to adopt the transitional CAP regulation, at the end of 2020, to ensure the continuity of the legal and financial support for CAP beneficiaries.

On 2nd December 2021, the agreement on the CAP reform was formally adopted by the co-legislators. France submitted its proposed SNP on 22nd December 2021, following extensive consultations. On 4th August 2022, France submitted a second proposal in response to the European Commission's comments. The Commission approved this proposal on 31st August 2022. At France's request, the EC approved amendments on 7th July 2023

and on 13th December 2023 (DG AGRI, accessed: 11 December 2023). On First January 2023, NSPs were launched in each Member State (Council of the European Union, 2024).

6.4 Position of France on greening

6.4.1 How France built its position on the greening

It is important to analyse how France has based its position on greening in order to understand which tools and definitions it aims to put in place through its strategy.

According to Mr. Frédéric Michel, “the word “greening” does not really reflect France's commitment to ecological transition”. The term "agro-ecological transition" (Fr. transition agro-écologique) is preferred to "greening" (Fr. verdissement). According to the position of France, this term covers more realities and tools than the term "greening" used in the 2014-2020 programming. We can observe a change in language between the two programming periods studied.

Since 2005, France has implemented a strategy of ecological transition through 10 plans: Animal welfare, Teaching how to produce differently, Beekeeping, Agroforestry, Seeds and sustainable agriculture, Plant proteins, Ambition bio, Energy Methanisation Nitrogen Autonomy, Ecophyto and Ecoantibio. These national plans are implemented at the regional level, nevertheless they are supported by some national funds. The 2024 Finance Bill for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France includes the hedge plan with EUR 45 million in Payment credit (PC) and EUR 110 million in commitment payment (CP). There is also the protein plan (EUR 65 million in PC and EUR 100 million in CP), the fund for food sovereignty and transitions (EUR 25 million in PC and EUR 200 million in CP) and finally the strategy to reduce the use of plant protection products (EUR 150 million in PC and EUR 250 million in CP) (Féret et al, 2023). The strategy of France relies on these various plans to create and defend the vision of France within the Council of the European Union. The goal is to align the various CAP tools with the objectives of these plans. This has led to a three-tier architecture for the environment, with cross-compliance of aid, eco-scheme and agri-environmental measures.

In 2017, Emmanuel Macron, President of the republic in France, announced the General Assembly on Food, known as ÉGAlim, bringing together all stakeholders from various agricultural sectors around two major themes: the creation and distribution of value, as well as the accessibility of healthy, safe and sustainable food for everyone. The consultation launched on July 20, 2017, resulted in the 2018 “ÉGAlim Law”. This law focusing on the balance of commercial relations in the agricultural and food sector and on healthy, sustainable and accessible food for everyone. Thus, the General Assembly on Food highlighted that consumers are attached to a high level of food safety and quality and to a traceability in production. It furthermore puts emphasis on the consumers seeking for better information and transparency on food production methods (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty in France was responsible for drawing up the NSP in collaboration with the other Ministries and regions for the EAFRD. As a part of the NSP and in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and the Council of 2 December 2021, a broad consultation of stakeholders has been carried out. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty will rely on a shared diagnosis of the agricultural, food, forestry and rural sectors (Impactons, 2020), and the public debate organised by the national commission for public debate between February 2020 and November 2020. The public debate, "ImPACtons" mobilised the public to an unprecedented extent in France on the agricultural and food theme. The debate produced 1,083 proposals. Several forums were set up, including the Citizens' Assembly on Agriculture, 12 on-site debates (including 1 digital debate) and 22 debates at home. In addition, a website was set up and received 51,222 visits. The debate centred around proponents of a policy supporting more extensive agriculture and advocates for a productive agriculture, promoting food sovereignty (Casillo, 2021). According to Mr. Marc Fesneau, Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, "its [NSP] implementation will enable our producers to fully commit to the transitions while meeting the challenges of the competitiveness and sovereignty of our food sectors" (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire, 1 March 2023).

6.4.2 France's position on Greening in the Common Agricultural Policy

It is important to understand France's position on the greening of the CAP at the European level.

In the long-term, France's position within the Council of the European Union has been weakened by two factors since its creation. Firstly, successive waves of enlargement have increased the number of players within the Council, which is made up of a larger and more heterogeneous group. The second development has been brought up by qualified majority voting, which means that texts can be adopted without France's approval. To conclude, France's influence and room for manoeuvre has been reduced, forcing the country to adopt a new strategy of alliance and negotiation. In the long-term, liberal countries such as Germany have had more influence on the CAP guidelines such as coupled aids (see 6.3.2 CAP negotiations environment within the Council of the European Union). Thus, France has consistently taken a defensive position on the CAP reforms imposed in 1992 and 2003 and supported the "shallowest and most gradual transitions possible" (Séronie, 2018). France benefited enormously from the system set up in 1962. France is now trying to put brakes on the reforms in order to maintain its position as an agricultural power subsidised by the EU. France has always argued for transition periods, for example with the external harmonisation of aid between the European countries (see 6.3.2 CAP negotiations environment within the Council of the European Union) or for the historical references ended in 2015.

In a documentary on the negotiations within the Council of the European Union, Mr. Stéphane Le Foll, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry from 16th May 2012 to 17th May 2017, defended the vision of France for the 2014-2023 CAP period. He said that he is in favour of external harmonisation/convergence of CAP subsidies, with the possibility of a bonus on the first hectares (doubling aid). France supported the possibility of a coupled aid of 15% (Frank et al, 2015).

During the last negotiations for the 2023-2027 programming, France successfully defended its interests and imposed its vision, according to Mr. Frédéric Michel. The EU

maintained the budget and approved the eco-scheme defended by France. As a part of the negotiations for the 2023-2027 CAP, France's strategy was to revise the environmental architecture of the previous CAP, based on three tools: cross-compliance, eco-schemes and the AECM. Regarding this new architecture, France would like to see maintained, strengthened and simplified cross-compliance in comparison to the level of 2014-2020 (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019). Concerning the eco-scheme, "France is in favour of this proposal, which is in line with our objective of incentive payments on a flat-rate basis for environmental services provided by agriculture and insufficiently remunerated by the market." (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019). To conclude, France wishes to recognise the risk associated with changing practices by adding an incentive component to the amounts of agri-environmental and climate measures (AECM).

In general, France imposes particular importance to proteins. Indeed, following the High-Level Orientation Council (CSO) on May 21, the Minister of Agriculture, spoke of "historic decisions on proteins"(Lecocq, 2024). Nevertheless, in its document setting out its priorities for the negotiations, France concludes that the policy in favour of setting up and renewing generations "remains a priority for France in the negotiations" (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019).

Given the importance of France agriculture and the diversity of its production, the position of France can be explained by farmers' aversion to risk. During the various negotiations, France has argued in favour of strengthening crisis management tools. France defends the possibility of not complying with competition rules in times of crisis: withdrawal of the product from the market, or even destruction, and the introduction of exceptional aid in the event of a market crisis. France would like the CAP to contribute to an improvement of their risk prevention by strengthening the resilience of farms through the development of risk management tools, such as insurance and mutual funds (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019). At the EU level, reflexion on risk management took off with the reform in 2003, by the introduction of decoupling aid. This leading to greater volatility in farm incomes.

6.4.3 Failures of negotiation strategies

Given that the CAP is a common policy made up of 27 Member States with a heterogeneous agriculture, the CAP does not always correspond to the vision of France or does not even achieve its objectives. This chapter shows all the failures of the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP negotiations.

In the 2014-2020 CAP negotiation, one of France's priorities, as explained above, is to maintain the CAP budget. According to Mr. Bruno Le Maire, Minister for Agriculture from 23 June 2009 to 10 May 2012, a CAP budget of EUR 371.72 billion for the period 2014-2020 "constitutes a floor, below which no reform will be possible" (Fabrégat, 2011). In the end, the budget negotiated amounted to EUR 362.787 billion for 2014-2020 CAP in 2011 prices. The 2014-2020 CAP budget provided for a cut of between "11% and 13% depending on the calculations" (Gault et al, 2015). In addition, in its 2017 report, the European Court of Auditors concluded on the limited effects of greening across all the Member States. Their arguments are based on the fact that, almost all beneficiaries, receiving a basic payment right, fulfilled the criteria (only 5.6% of beneficiaries did not meet at least one of the criteria in 2018). We can conclude that the green payment has made it possible to limit deterioration of land but has not led to an increase in environmental and climate performance (European Court of Auditors, 2017).

The 2023-2027 CAP negotiations took place in a specific environment. The proposed regulations of the commission were to apply from first January 2021 to 31 December 2027. The delay, to adopt the reform on time, had several reasons. Firstly, the co-legislators did not start negotiations on the CAP until the adoption of the MFF. The reason cited is that knowledge of the funds allocated to the CAP is essential for defining the distribution of resources, especially as a reduction in the CAP budget was under discussion (Bourget, 2021). The same reason resulted in a longer negotiation process in 2013. In fact, it can be mentioned that the legislative regulations of the CAP and the MFF negotiation have been overlapping since 2013. Another reason was the electoral calendar. The chances of reaching an agreement with the legislation in place at this time, were very unlikely, due to a break caused by the elections. The negotiation restarted in 2020 after the renewal of the EP and the establishment

of the new EC. According to Bernard Bourget “the implementation of the new CAP was therefore initially postponed from 2021 to 2022” (Bourget, 2021). The new President of the European Commission, Ursula Von Der Leyen, made climate neutrality by 2050 a priority for the College of Commissioners. As part of her Green Pact, she presented two strategies for 2020 that have affected the CAP negotiations: the "Farm to Fork strategy" and the “strategy for biodiversity”. These two policies forecast to “the reduction of pesticide use in agriculture and antibiotics in livestock by 50% and synthetic fertilisers by 20% by 2030 and, on the other hand, the significant increase in the share of agricultural land used for organic farming from the current 10% to 25% by 2030” (Bourget, 2021). It is also forecast to “the withdrawal of 10% of agricultural land from production to be set aside for enhanced ecological protection” (Bourget, 2021). Additionally, Mr. Gault et al, explain in a report on Negotiating the Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, that the inclusion of the EP has greatly increased the time taken to negotiate the CAP. As a player in the negotiation of the CAP reform, the EP makes this common policy more complex (Gault et al, 2015).

This common policy is less and less well understood by farmers and the population, as shown by protests of farmers in January and February 2024 throughout Europe. In France, official discontent centred on two points: on the over-transposition of environmental policies and on the fair remuneration for agricultural work (FNSEA, 2024). It should be noted that unfair competition from third countries via free trade agreements was a recurring theme in the debates. Thus, the CAP is connected to other policies of the EU: to the Commercial policy, to phytosanitary conditions and to the Green Deal among others. Already on the 21 May 2021, the presentation of the NSP at the end of the Higher Guidance Council, by the Minister of Agriculture, Julien Denormandie, received a mixed feeling from the farming unions. For example, the Peasant Confederation (fr. Confédération paysanne) deplored "the rejection of three major social demands of the CAP, namely the revaluation of the payment for the first hectares, aid for small farms and the capping of aid" (Lecocq, 2021).

6.4.4 Successes of negotiation strategies

During the negotiations for the 2014-2020 CAP, Mr. Le Foll, defended the France position in favour of coupled aid. France found an alliance with Poland to defend the possibility of 15% coupled aid in exchange for maintaining the simplified payment system for Poland. After obtaining a blocking minority (Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Finland, Spain, Romania, Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovakia and the Czech Republic), the only country firmly opposed to this measure was Germany. To get the text accepted, France reduced its demand from 15% to 13%. In the negotiating mandate of the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the adopted figure is 12%. The coupling of aid was finally authorised at 13% after the trilogue in 2015 (Frank et al, 2015). In this case, the mandate of the European Parliament rapporteurs provided for a greater possibility of coupled aid. This position is favourable to France and its position is therefore more present in the final text thanks to the EP.

On the 2023-2027 CAP negotiation, one of France's greatest successes was to maintain the CAP budget. In the initial proposals from the European Commission, the CAP budget indicated "a decrease of -4% to -5% in the first pillar and -10% to -15% in the second pillar" (Lecocq, 2021). The final budget is EUR 378.532 billion, in line with wishes of France. Moreover, the introduction of the eco-scheme is also a huge success for France. Indeed, France has promoted this system as "compulsory for all the Member States, which is essential to put an end to this unfair competition within the European market" (Lecocq, 2021). In an effort to simplify things for farmers, France has successfully obtained the recognition of the right of error in the 2023-2027 programming. Finally, in its roadmap for the 2023-2027 CAP negotiations, France announced that the CAP "cannot be conceived without social, environmental and health regulation of exchanges with other countries." (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty of France, 2019). This remark is based on abuses in the working conditions of seasonal workers. It has therefore led to the introduction of a social conditionality in the CAP. According to Mr. Lafforgue, the social conditionality was defended by France in accordance with the triptyque of agriculture: socially, environmentally and economically.

Mr. Fesneau, announced on February 26, 2024, after the Council of Agriculture Ministers in Brussels, that the Green Deal should also be a "Product Deal." He expressed satisfaction with the new measures regarding fallow land, for which France had taken the initiative (Fesneau, 2024). "Instead of keeping fallow land or unproductive elements on 4% of their arable land, EU farmers cultivating nitrogen-fixing crops (such as lentils, peas, or favas) and/or catch crops without the use of plant protection products on 4% of their arable land, will be considered as meeting the requirement, of what is known as BCAE 8." (Commission Representation in France, 2024). In his statement, Mr. Fesneau adds: "It doesn't mean that we don't want to make transitions, but it means that we need to take into account the reality of things," (Fesneau, 2024). He therefore refers to the impacts of environmental disasters.

We can therefore see that the 2023-2027 programme, unlike the 2014-2020 programme, is in terms of budget and condition more in line with expectations of France.

6.5 Developing solutions

As part of this master thesis, I will be putting forward proposals to strengthen France's influence and improve its strategy and proposals as part of the forthcoming negotiations for the 2027-2033 CAP. These solutions have been presented to my two interviewees, Mr. Frédéric Michel and Mr. Christian Lafforgue to hear from their expert eye on the feasibility of these proposals. According to Mr. Frédéric Michel, these propositions are "very interesting", joining me on the importance of those subjects within public policies. According to Mr. Christian Lafforgue, "necessary" proposals for strengthening France's influence in the negotiations have been put forward. He points out that the position of the authorities of France are shared at both political and technical levels.

The presence of French people in institutions is not representative of the importance of agriculture for France. For example, of the 48 members of the AGRI Committee in the EP, only 4 are members from France (including one vice-president). It is important to be aware of the importance of the choice of personalities, before the European parliamentary elections. Identify priority jobs as far upstream as possible (Caresche and Lequiller, 2016). The positions of rapporteur, coordinator and chairman of the AGRI and ENVI Commission

must become priorities for MEPs from France or affinitive Member States. Indeed, the most experienced MEPs in the field are often favoured in the allocation of reports. Furthermore, the importance of the committee chairman must not be diminished. Following the European election, the nomination of the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural development must be a priority for France. It is therefore important to strengthen the French presence in the services of the European Commission. France must set up a stronger inter-institutional network between the institutions, made up of parliamentary assistants, MEPs, Commission civil servants, lobbyists and regional representatives in Brussels. This network should not only include French people, but also nationalities in which we have common interests, with France's permanent representation at its head. This must be combined with greater influence for France with French and foreign MEPs. The work of the GSEA is fundamental in this objective.

The CAP is becoming increasingly unreadable and complex. It is therefore essential to develop a way of communication with the general public and farmers to inform them about the challenges of greening the CAP. We also need to educate civil servants from France on agricultural issues. Furthermore, experts on agriculture need to visit schools. Agriculture should therefore be a fundamental subject for master's degrees in European Affairs. For example, at the Science Po Paris, none of the master's degrees specialised on European Affairs do currently deal with agriculture.

According to Farm Europe (2022), EUR 85 billion is missing to maintain the 2020 value of CAP in current euro. France has been offered two options for maintaining the CAP budget for 2028-2034: increasing the GNI share (20% possible) according to Jean-Marie Séronie or strengthening the EU's own resources. The second option would be more in line with the budgetary austerity ideology of the liberal countries, who will want to make drastic cuts in traditional policies in order to repay the common loan and finance new policies. The introduction of an American-style sufficiency payment would be a return to the measures of 2003, concerning the setting of a fixed budget. If member countries' contributions fall proportionately, it will be less justifiable to cut the CAP budget. France can rely on the EP to support its proposal. This increase in the budget should benefit AECM and allow a greater difference between the two first levels of eco-scheme allocation in France. The "wide and shallow" policy supports farmers to maintain environmentally-friendly agriculture in France

and avoid overuse of land. However, a difference of EUR 20 between the two first levels is not enough to encourage farmers to take greater risks by making their agriculture evolve to respect the environment. Given that farmers are the main cause of climate change, the EU must provide sufficient resources to support a transition in this sector.

Faced with increasing soil and climate risks due to global warming, France must continue to promote risk management tools, in the name of France, European and global food security.

France needs to introduce more targeted policies to combat the negative externalities produced by agriculture. The "wide and shallow" policy must be accompanied by a more targeted policy through the second pillar. Taking up the position of the various reports, France needs to focus on CO₂ sequestration and on the reduction of the impact of beef production on its territory. France is Europe's leading cattle producer, with 18 million head of cattle, including 3.5 million for milk production in 2020. For example, the production of methane from livestock traps 86 times more heat than carbon dioxide in a over 20 year period. According to the FAO, "Globally digestive and enteric methane emissions are equivalent to about 3.3 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents" (FAO, accessed: 21 February 2024). The importance of making this sector more sustainable and greener is well established.

Farm protests across Europe between January and March 2024 showed that farmers want to be paid fairly for their work. Moreover, they protest for fair competition and administrative clarification, particularly on greening. The EU must introduce regulations on the distribution of value within the production chain to support farmers' power. This means supporting agricultural cooperatives and their associations. The European Council of March 2024 called to "strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain, in particular to ensure a fair income" (European Council, 2024). Regarding fair competition, France must work together with the European Parliament, to ensure that standards are reciprocated in free trade agreements. Finally, the European Union must continue to simplify administrative procedures by introducing new technology tools, such as artificial intelligence, to support farmers.

The principle of subsidiarity and transfer between pillars makes it easier to sign agreements, but greatly weakens the coherence of action by the European public. It therefore increases farmers' and citizens' distrust of this policy, which is often illegible.

Faced with rising food prices, consumers are opting for discount brands in supermarkets. Organic consumption falls in supermarkets because organic products are generally more expensive than conventional products. The current inflation has had a major impact on this sector. The target of 25% of land for organic farming could lead to a market saturation for certain products. France needs to take action through the “Agence Bio” about communication, news aids and collective restoration.

We have seen that the CAP is no longer a first priority policy for many countries, even in France, where before the agricultural crisis the debate centred on European defence. It's important to give the CAP a new meaning and the importance of the budget must not overshadow the importance of reforming it. Today, European countries look at the CAP way too much in terms of budgetary costs, whereas agriculture and fisheries are essential elements in the continent's construction. To achieve this, France must stress the importance of agriculture for European food sovereignty and security and for Europe as an exporter. The EU cannot afford to be dependent on countries like Argentina or Australia "which experience a drought every three years that causes prices to soar" (Guyau, 2013)

Germany's position on coupled aid is changing. Resulting on the liberalism failing philosophically in Germany, France could take the leading position in the next CAP 2028-2034. An axis between France, Germany and Poland could be built to support the CAP reform. The Weimar triangle is a juxtaposition between the North/South and the West/East as well as a perfect informal forum to debate and to find a common position. As in 2012 on coupled aids, the coalition of France and Poland could help to emerge a political agreement in the Council of the European Union. Coupled aids are a tool for European agricultural power and fundamental European food sovereignty. Especially at a time when Europe is experiencing a war on its territory. This *sui generis* structure could offer an alternative to the Franco-German couple, which faces difficulty in reaching agreements on agriculture concerning ideological differences. This pair frightening off the smaller countries.

The Security Cooperation Agreement between France and Ukraine shows that Ukraine's accession to the European Union is no longer a question of "If" but "When". Mr. Charles Michel, current President of the European Council, cited the end of the decade as the horizon of Ukraine joining the European Union. According to the DG Treasury from France, Ukraine is the largest agricultural power within the European continent, with arable land of 32.5 million hectares (twice the area of arable land in France). Ukraine's accession to the EU is likely to cause an “earthquake” in European agriculture, opening up the market and redistributing agricultural funds between countries and reducing the net return to all EU Member States. In fact, the “wheat granary” of Europe “will become the largest beneficiary of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy” (Zsolt et al, 2024) and will therefore represent a cost between EUR 110 and 136 billion from the EU's seven-year budget (0.13% of EU GDP). Negotiations on the 2028-2034 CAP must be seen as an opportunity to think and organise changes in this order. Agriculture will surely be a tension point in the negotiation for Ukraine's accession to the EU.

In addition, it is important to unclench the dependence of the European Union from third world countries. The Versailles Declaration called the European Commission to improve the European food security (European Council, 2022). France and Europe are highly dependent on third world countries for inputs, especially about nitrogen. This is a major issue for Europe's sovereignty. The greening allows the EU to be less dependent on inputs from third world countries (Guyomard, 2024) through a European strategy to reduce the use of inputs. This must be combined with a broader policy of food sovereignty over quantities. However, it is also important for a national strategy to be put in place, faced with the fact that, France continues to lose market share in the single market to its European partners. It is vital to organise a strategy favourable to France.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Observations and processing

It has been argued throughout this thesis on how France defends its position on the greening of agriculture in the negotiations for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) since 2009. Two CAPs have structured this period: CAP 2014-2020 and CAP 2023-2027. This thesis demonstrated the tools and forums used in the CAP negotiations particularly to implement France's strategy.

The research has shown that the various waves of enlargement, causing a heterogeneity of agriculture on the territory of the European Union. It has also demonstrated that the willingness of greening agriculture provoked a renationalisation of the CAP to facilitate political agreements between institutions. Given the increasing complexity of the CAP, as demonstrated by the farmers' demonstrations in Europe in 2024, a unified, common CAP is no longer capable of adapting to the diversity of the European agrosystems (varying farm sizes, different soil and climate conditions). To enable a consensus to be reached, the CAP, based on the principle of subsidiarity, has been renationalised over the last few generations to enable the Member States adapting the CAP to their nationally and regionally given realities. This resulted in France being able to adapt its agricultural policy to its territory and allowing transition periods for farmers between reforms.

Faced with this strategy, attention has been shed on the question of financial resources. This is why, the CAP and the MFF negotiations have been correlated over a period of seven years, since 2013. As far as France is concerned, the question of net return is paramount. Its position is to maintain a substantial CAP budget to support France agriculture. However, the liberal northern European countries want to reduce the importance of the CAP within the EU in the wake of the 2008 crisis and in their desire to develop other policies. The budget allocated to the CAP for 2014-2020 is a demonstration of their success. France, for its part, has managed to maintain the budget for the 2023-2027 CAP. As a result, the attention paid by decision-makers to the non-financial dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy is diminishing, showing that politicians from France are disengaging and losing interest in this common policy.

Our study has also shown how the inclusion of the European Parliament as a co-legislator should not be seen as a weakening of the position of France. In fact, France has 79 MEPs in the EP. Numerous cases, such as the negotiations on decoupled aids in 2012 and 2013, show that France can rely on the European Parliament to support its ambitions.

Finally, the impact of the green payment and the allocation of the eco-scheme show that the impact of the greening of the CAP has not considerably improved the quality of soils and the biodiversity. Under these conditions, the notion of greening appears to be a tactic to "legitimise" the instrument of the first pillar. In this way, the positive externalities and public goods produced by agriculture justify funding for farmers.

During the 1992 and 2003 negotiations, France took a defensive stance against changes to the CAP aimed at decoupling aid. For the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP, the authorities of France have taken up an offensive position defending France's proposals. France's position is a 15% coupling of aid, with a three-tier architecture for the environment: cross-compliance of aid, eco-scheme and agri-environmental measures. France puts forward risk management (risk averse of farmers), administrative simplification and a budget in line with European ambitions. Following this study, we can deduce that the position of France was heard and implemented more during the negotiations for the 2023-2027 CAP than 2014-2023 CAP.

7.2 Evaluation and comments on results

In the context of my master's thesis, the limited time and the difficult context of the literature make it possible to pursue this study. Indeed, the greening of the CAP in France is not a subject sufficiently studied by the scientific literature, which was a significant challenge for this analysis. In addition, this study could be completed by interviewing other experts coming from different institutions in this field if sufficient time would have been given. These independent conditions would not allow to extend this topic. Nevertheless, I have managed to elaborate on the topic within the available literature and sources.

Covering a period of 16 years (2009-2024), the political alternatives within governments and strategies did not allow me to find employees covering the entire period.

As a result, interviewees responded only based on their own experience. This issue is solved in this thesis by an intense research of the available resources.

It should be noted that it is complicated to reconstitute the strategy of France during the negotiations for the 2014-2020 and 2023-2027 CAP a-posteriori. In fact, the strategies are broken down at the level of each article to form alliances and coalitions. It is therefore complicated to recreate an overall cohesion between the different institutions and countries. In addition, the integration of the position of France within the mandate of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union does not allow a clear strategy to emerge.

The 2023 reform introduced a policy of target results, unlike the 2014-2020 CAP, which was based on the principle of target means. This study will be completed after the Biannual performance review for the financial year 2024 of this policy. A study comparing European countries is essential to adjust the application in France. This will make it possible to assess the France NSP for protecting nature.

In addition, it would be interesting to follow up this study with an analysis of political discourse in France to understand the motivations behind these reforms. Indeed, Erjavec and Erjavec, at European level, analysed that "key actors in EU agricultural politics have used the "greening" vocabulary for the justification of a specific policy" (Erjavec and Erjavec, 2015) and to justify the importance of the budget to the public. An analysis of the speeches made by officials from France (President of the Republic, Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty) will help us to understand the motivation for greening agriculture in France and the strategy used. It will be important to examine both policy measurement and meaning.

This study has shown that the integration of the European Parliament as co-legislator since the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 has not reduced France's influence in the CAP negotiations. However, according to the report by Gault et al, the integration of the EP makes France's position more diffuse within an even larger body (Gault et al, 2015). A comparative analysis between the position of France and votes within the Parliament would help to prove the results obtained above from interviews and research papers.

8. Conclusion

As the nephew of farmers and EU citizen aware of the climate crisis facing the planet, as well as a future young EU affairs professional, the subject of greening the CAP is very important to me. Agriculture practices have a major impact on climate change and the rise of the global temperature, next to supplying the nations with food and resources. As a world leader in environmental transition, with the objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, the EU must consider this sector as a key component. Moreover, being the world's leading producer of farmhouse produce, France must play its part in this transition while preserving its agricultural heritage.

As part of my double degree: European Economics and Political Affairs (University of Lille - France) and European agrarian Diplomacy (Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze), the aim of this thesis is to add onto the literature of the greening of the CAP by taking the case of France to understand what France's strategy was during the last two CAP negotiations (2014-2020 and 2023-2027).

The aim of this study was to retrace France's position on the last two CAP negotiations (2014-2020 and 2023-2027) in an educational way, based on reports by authors and institutions. This is a topical subject, which needs to be addressed in the front of the agricultural protests in Europe denouncing the increasing complexity of agricultural subsidies by an environmental "*mille-feuille*" and the disconnection between agricultural policy and the reality of farmers.

It is vital that the issue of the impact of agriculture on the environment is placed at the centre of discussions, France must therefore continue to defend its position and its ideas within the institutions, relying on experts in the field. It is strongly stressed that France should invest in building a larger set of policy experts. This is the main tool to keep pursuing the best France interest in the future CAP negotiations and greening regulations for the farmers and the France society as a whole.

This thesis has shown that France is a main stakeholder of the CAP negotiations. Its influence increased in the 2023-2027 CAP period following the 2014-2020 CAP. France has successfully integrated the European Parliament into its diplomatic strategy. France promoted coupled aids, right of mistake and three-tier architecture (cross-compliance, eco-

schemes and AECM). The greening of the CAP was used as a legit tool, in the face of the reduced consequences of its involvement, to justify the CAP policy. Finally, in view of the complexification of this policy (enlargement and greening), stakeholders of the negotiations decided to give more flexibility to countries. Negotiations centred on the MFF, for which France is defending a net return.

The CAP is not just a policy to support farmers, but also an essential tool for Europe's sovereignty in an unstable world. It is essential to remember that the CAP is part of broader public policies which included, for example, the trade policy, the free trade negotiations at the WTO or between countries, phytosanitary policy, Nature Restoration Law.

To conclude, it is important to remember that in a global world, there are fundamentals that give European citizens access to healthy, high-quality, sustainably-produced food at a reasonable price. It is fundamental to redefine the direction of the CAP with a both environmental and fair price dynamic.

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10. Appendix

First interview (7 november 2023) : Frédéric Michel - Delegate for Agricultural Affairs : Spokesman for the Special Committee on Agriculture CSA, CAP, CMO and rural development policy at Permanent Representation of France to the European union

1. Comment la France définit-elle le verdissement de l'agriculture ? Quels sont les documents qui constituent la source officielle de la définition et de la stratégie de verdissement de la France ?

Il n'y a pas de véritable définition du verdissement car le mot verdissement ne reflète pas vraiment l'intention de la France en matière de transition écologique. Il est plus juste d'utiliser le mot : transition agro-écologique dans la position française. Cela peut couvrir de nombreuses réalités et outils. Dans le cadre de la dernière programmation, on ne parlait pas de rien non plus, il y avait le paiement vert.

L'idée fondamentale de la France était de revoir l'architecture environnementale au sein de la PAC et donc d'utiliser trois outils : conditionnalité des aides, éco-régime et les mesures agro-environnementales et climatiques.

A partir des années 2005, il y a une réflexion sur une stratégie de transition écologique, et cette stratégie s'est déclinée en différents plans : un plan pour favoriser l'agriculture biologique, la protection des pollinisateurs. Il y en avait une dizaine. Ce sont des plans nationaux qui se déclinaient au niveau régional. On s'est basé là-dessus pour construire une position française et essayer de faire en sorte que les différents outils de la PAC puissent répondre aux objectifs de cette stratégie. C'est ce qui a permis d'aboutir à cette architecture à trois étages en matière environnementale, qui est la conditionnalité des aides, éco-régime et les mesures agro-environnementales

2. S'agit-il de la même vision que celle de la Commission ? Comment la vision de l'écologisation de la France s'aligne-t-elle sur celle de la Commission ?

La Commission a construit sa position s'agissant du pacte vert sur la base des contributions de tous les Etats membres, mais aussi des parties prenantes (professionnels, citoyens, etc.). Cela se fait notamment via des consultations publiques.

Ainsi, la position de la Commission reprend-elle non seulement les visions des Etats membres (et donc de la France) mais aussi des autres parties prenantes. Il n'y a pas à proprement parler de « compétition » de vision ou d'alignement de vision. En d'autres termes, personne ne s'aligne sur personne, mais la Commission prend en compte la vision de la France et la France prend acte des décisions in fine issues du processus législatif.

3. Quelles sont les priorités de la France en matière de verdissement de l'agriculture ?

Vous trouverez ici : <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/le-plan-daction-global-pour-lagro-ecologie> toutes les priorités françaises en matière d'agroécologie. C'est sur cette base, régulièrement renouvelée, que sont construites les priorités de la France. Vous trouverez ici : <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/mots-cles/infographie> des infographies illustrant certaines de ces priorités, comme par exemple le soutien à l'agriculture biologique, l'encouragement à la plantation de haies, les mesures agro-environnementales, etc.

La France défend une architecture « verte » en 3 niveaux :

- La conditionnalité des aides (<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/la-conditionnalite-des-aides-pac>) ;
- Les « écorégimes »
(file:///D:/donnees/uti/prive/Documents/Michelf/internet/05_2302_Paiement-decouples-Ecoregime_FCH%203.pdf) ;
- Les mesures incitatives comme les mesures agroenvironnementales et climatiques, y compris la conversion à l'agriculture biologique (<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/maec-les-nouvelles-mesures-agro-environnementales-et-climatiques-de-la-pac>) .

4. Quelle est la stratégie utilisée par la France pendant les négociations de la PAC ?

Comme tous les Etats membres de l'UE, la France informe régulièrement la Commission de ses priorités et de ses propositions, de façon à ce que ces dernières, si la Commission les juge intéressantes, soient incluses dans les propositions législatives.

Les autorités françaises partagent également ses positions dans le cadre de points divers lors du Conseil des ministres de l'agriculture qui se réunit une fois par an, ce qui lui permet de solliciter des soutiens des autres Etats membres. Elles contribuent, sous forme de notes des autorités françaises, aux réflexions de la Commission et une fois le travail législatif initié, elles informent la présidence du Conseil de leurs propositions de compromis pour faciliter l'adoption d'une orientation générale, puis d'un accord à l'issue des trilogues.

En parallèle, les autorités françaises font connaître aux membres du parlement européen leurs positions et leurs lignes rouges.

5. Quels sont les pays alliés (ou similaires) à la France dans les négociations sur la PAC?

C'est très compliqué de répondre à cette question car c'est très variable d'un moment à l'autre. On a des alliés entre guillemets traditionnels. Ce qui peut les catégoriser, c'est d'avoir des structures agricoles qui sont relativement proches de la nôtre. Ce qui est compliqué, quand on commence à parler de la PAC et de son évolution que se soit en matière environnementale ou autre, c'est qu'il ne faut jamais oublier qu'on a 27 États membres avec 27 caractéristique agricoles (taille d'exploitation variables, des opportunités pédoclimatiques différentes, etc). C'est compliqué d'avoir une PAC en taille unique. On doit faire face à quelque chose d'un peu schizophrénique : d'un côté on a besoin d'avoir une PAC qui s'adapte à la réalité de chaque Etat membre, mais d'un autre côté comme c'est une politique intégrée, que c'est un marché intérieur et qu'on veut éviter les distorsions de concurrence, donc il faut préserver le caractère commun de la PAC.

Traditionnellement on a souvent des positions communes avec l'Espagne, relativement communes avec l'Italie, l'Irlande. Après en matière de Verdissement, on peut s'appuyer sur l'Allemagne, l'Autriche, la Slovaquie, la Croatie. Mais qui ont des caractéristique environnemental relativement différentes.

De plus, on ne peut pas parler de la PAC sans parler de la politique commerciale. Par exemple avec Allemagne nous allons partager un certain nombre d'ambitions environnementales mais l'Allemagne est traditionnellement très ouverte en terme de commerce international et donc va privilégier des outils qui sont entre guillemet non distorsif

donc ils vont être très opposés de près ou de loin à ce qui peut se rapprocher à une aide couplée à la production. Alors que nous on va estimer que dans certains cas particulier, ça peut avoir un intérêt. Les allemands sont fortement opposés à l'aide à l'élevage. Nous il nous semble que dans certaines zones, si on veut le maintien de prairies ou le maintien d'activités en montagne parce que sinon il y aurait des fermetures de lieu avec des risques d'incendies et une perte en biodiversité, donc il faut avoir un certains nombre d'aides couplées pour maintenir l'élevage. Donc là on va pas être d'accord avec eux. C'est ce genre de nuance. Il n'y a pas d'alignement complet. Chaque État membre à ses caractéristiques et puis ses particularités. Au-delà de l'agriculture, il y a un volet économique, social parfois même philosophique où on n'est pas forcément d'accord. Par exemple si on a énormément de difficulté à discuter avec des pays comme la Suède, qui vont privilégier les aspects libéraux avec notamment une ouverture commerciale totale, quand nous on sera beaucoup plus réservé en disant : ok, on est une puissance exportatrice donc on est ok pour le commerce international mais pas au détriment de nos objectifs de notre transition agro-environnementale.

6. Où et comment se sont déroulées les négociations sur le verdissement ?

Le « verdissement » n'est pas isolé du reste des négociations de la PAC. Il est discuté au Conseil pour obtenir une orientation générale, puis au Parlement qui doit adopter un mandat de négociation, et enfin au cours des trilogues, comme tous les autres aspects de la négociation de la PAC.

7. Quelle stratégie la France utilise-t-elle pour mettre en œuvre ses priorités en matière de verdissement et convaincre les autres États membres de l'UE ?

Cela dépend au moment où on est dans le cadre de la discussion.

1ère action est de faire passer le message avant que la Commission ne présente des propositions de règlement. Dans le cadre de la future PAC qui va commencer en 2027, la commission va commencer à sortir des documents début 2025. Tout au long de l'année 2024, on va rédiger des papiers de prise de décision pour essayer d'influencer/de faire partager nos

idées au sein des différents organes : Conseil, conférences de haut niveau, réunions avec le personnel de la Commission, avec les nouveaux parlementaires)

Lorsque le document est sur la table, plusieurs options s'offrent à nous :

Étape 2 : par exemple, la dernière fois, nous avons organisé une grande conférence à l'OCDE pour les ministres qui souhaitent y participer (en impliquant les acteurs français pour témoigner en faveur des idées que nous pourrions promouvoir). C'est le deuxième temps au cours duquel nous partageons des messages sur la base de la proposition de la Commission.

3e action pendant les négociations : intervenir au sein du conseil en tant que membre, créer une coalition : points divers, de papiers cosignés (porté par plusieurs Etats membres dans lequel nous rappelons un certain nombre d'éléments). On va aussi se rapprocher de la présidence en exercice du conseil pour la nourrir avec des expertises techniques et points. En même temps, on va faire connaître notre position au Parlement.

Parfois, on se trouve dans une situation dans laquelle nos idées prospèrent mieux au sein du Parlement qu'au Conseil, et comme in fine le Parlement est le co-législateur, nous pouvons essayer de faire en sorte que nos idées émergent au Parlement.

Par exemple, c'est pas dans la PAC mais c'est très lié, l'idée qui fonctionne beaucoup mieux au Parlement qu'au conseil c'est la réciprocité des normes = la politique commerciale. Si les producteurs agricoles européens sont tenus de respecter les normes, les produits importés dans l'Union européenne doivent provenir de système offrant au moins le même niveau de garanties. Par exemple, l'utilisation d'antibiotiques comme accélérateurs de croissance, ça c'est des choses que l'on porte plus au Parlement qu'au Conseil. Pourquoi ? Parce que au conseil il y a toujours cette difficulté de discuter des questions commerciales car la politique commerciale est une compétence exclusive de la Commission. Du coup, beaucoup d'Etats membres, qui sont libéraux, ne veulent pas mettre d'entraves au commerce. Alors qu'au parlement, il y a des parlementaires sont plus sensibles de par leurs liens avec le consommateur. Ils vont demander que les produits importés de pays tiers vont respecter les normes européennes que ceux produits dans l'Union européenne. Cela permet aussi de

garantir l'équité, ..., l'absence de distorsion de concurrence sur le marché. Voilà un exemple de thématique, où si on l'a pas au conseil, on va essayer de le porter au Parlement.

Pour la dernière négociation de la PAC : Il y a plusieurs règlements qui constituent la PAC dont la partie programme stratégique national et le règlement horizontal (deux entièrement refondus) et mis à jour sur le règlement de l'organisation commune des marchés, ce qu'on appelle l'OCM unique. La France était plus allante pour renforcer les outils de gestion de crise, notamment pour permettre dans certains cas de ne pas respecter les règles de concurrence en cas de crise : retrait du produit du marché, voir les détruire et mettre en place des aides exceptionnelles quand il y a des crises sur le marché. Ça, par exemple, on n'a pas réussi à l'avoir dans le mandat du conseil mais on l'a eu de façon plus prononcée dans le mandat du parlement. Au final, comme à chaque fois il y a un compromis. Etant donné que le mandat du parlement était plus ambitieux que celui du conseil, cela a aidé la position française.

8. Quelles ont été les questions les plus sensibles ?

En ce moment il y a un gros sujet, c'est la réduction de l'utilisation des pesticides. La France est relativement isolée car on est relativement ambitieux pour pousser pour réduire l'utilisation des pesticides et notamment on veut des objectifs contraignants pour les Etats membres et là on est assez isolé. Il y a une vingtaine d'Etat membres qui demandent à ce qu'il n'y ait pas d'objectifs contraignants. On a uniquement l'Allemagne, les Pays-bas, le Luxembourg, on est juste quatre Etats membres qui se battent pour avoir des objectifs contraignants. Les autres sont soit neutres, soit opposés. On voit bien que dans la mise en place du Pact vert (Green Deal) il y a une frange des pays de l'Est et du Nord qui sont pas du tout dans l'esprit de voir accroître encore leurs efforts de contribution de diminution pour des problématiques de maintien de leurs production. Après on fait très rapidement le lien avec la souveraineté alimentaire avec l'autonomie stratégique etc. Mais nous avons beaucoup d'Etats membres, comme la Pologne, la Hongrie, la Roumanie, qui sont très inquiets. Il est probable que la proximité avec la guerre en Ukraine, les sensibilise. Mais eux ne souhaitent pas réduire leurs capacités de production, en tout cas pas la mettre en péril en réduisant la capacité de pesticides qu'ils peuvent utiliser. Là typiquement nous sommes particulièrement isolés. Il n'y a pas de règle générale, vraiment il faut le voir texte par texte,

point par point. Pour résumer, sur la réduction des pesticides au Conseil, il y a une majorité d'Etats membres qui sont contre les objectifs contraignants. Nous sommes isolés. A l'inverse, le parlement est très ambitieux et voudrait fortement réduire la quantité de pesticides utilisés. Si on prend un autre texte complètement différent, sur la restauration de la nature, là on est dans la situation complètement inverse. Le Conseil est très ambitieux et un Parlement qui a carrément supprimé l'idée de restauration des écosystèmes agricoles en supprimant l'article. C'est pour cela que je disais que c'était vraiment au cas par cas et c'est parfois très compliqué à posteriori de reconstruire une cohérence dans les positions à la fois des institutions et des pays.

9. Pensez-vous que le budget de la PAC adopté par l'UE est de plus en plus proche de la vision défendue par la France ?

Je dirais que sur la dernière PAC, on a été plutôt moteur à la fois parce qu'on a été un ardent défenseur du maintien de la PAC et parce qu'on a obtenu notre idée d'éco-régime, idée portée par la France. Sur la dernière PAC on a plutôt réussi. Si on remonte plus loin, je dirais que c'est moins évident et il est probable que des pays comme l'Allemagne aient été plus influents, car ce sont eux qui ont vraiment poussé pour avoir des paiements directs complètement découplés, pour limiter les paiements couplés. Et là où on se trouve dans une situation contre-intuitive, c'est qu'aujourd'hui, dans la préparation de la prochaine PAC, les allemands sont les premiers à remettre en cause le découplage des aides. C'est assez cocasse car c'est eux qui avaient réussi à le faire imposer. C'est pas évident d'y répondre, et je vous garderai bien d'y répondre par oui ou par non car en fait ce que je veux vous montrer c'est que le PAC c'est un paquebot, quand c'est mis dans une direction, c'est très compliqué de la faire traîner ou tourner. Quand à un moment on a un certain nombre de pays qui arrivent à la faire tourner, ça va dans une direction mais pendant ce temps là, les choses peuvent évoluer en terme politique ou de contexte géopolitique etc , et donc on peut se retrouver dans certains cas, et c'est le cas de l'Allemagne aujourd'hui, à dénoncer un système qu'ils ont très fortement contribué à mettre en place. C'est compliqué de répondre si la PAC aujourd'hui répond véritablement aux ambitions de la France. Sur la dernière PAC, c'est probable que ça a été plutôt un succès. Avec toutes les nuances nécessaires.

Le budget de la PAC dépend d'une négociation globale, je ne peux pas vous répondre sur ce point. La France a toujours défendu un budget à la hauteur des ambitions que l'on fixe pour l'agriculture européenne.

10. La stratégie française d'écologisation de l'agriculture a-t-elle été consultée par d'autres parties prenantes de l'agriculture (organisations d'agriculteurs, ONG environnementales, instituts scientifiques, etc.)

Oui, des consultations de grande ampleur ont eu lieu partout en France, notamment avec des consultations citoyennes (<https://www.vie-publique.fr/consultations/282369-consultation-plan-strategique-de-la-france-future-pac-2023-2027>). Tous les acteurs (recherches, ONG, enseignements, associations de consommateurs) ont été consultés et associés.

Second interview (30 november 2023) : Mr. Christian LAFFORGUE - Assistant to the Head of the Common Agricultural Policy Agriculture - Food - Fisheries Sector of the General Secretariat for European Affairs.

1. Comment la France définit-elle le verdissement de l'agriculture ? Quels sont les documents qui constituent la source officielle de la définition et de la stratégie de verdissement de la France ?

Le terme que vous avez utilisé m'a un peu surpris, c'est un terme qui figurait dans la programmation de PAC 2015-2022 mais qui ne figure pas beaucoup moins dans la programmation actuelle. On ne parle plus de verdissement mais plus d'éco-régime. C'est une expression de l'architecture verte de la PAC. Il faut savoir que c'est quelque chose qui a débuté il y a très longtemps, je pense même il y a 24 ans avec la mise en place du développement rural en 1999 au travers notamment des mesures agro-environnementales favorables à l'environnement qui a instauré une agriculture plus durable et plus soucieuse de la prise en compte de l'environnement effectivement. Après si on veut une vision plus globale, on peut remarquer que cet acte de naissance de la durabilité de l'agriculture et de son verdissement s'est renforcé en 2005 avec la mise en place de la conditionnalité des aides PAC et au travers notamment des sous-domaines environnementaux et des sous-domaines des ZE qui prennent en charge des exigences à respecter pour tous les exploitants agricoles visés.

à vis des problématiques environnementales et des problématiques liées à à l'entretien des paysages, liées à la protection des cours d'eaux, liées à la protection des sols etc. Cette architecture verte, elle c'est encore plus, on peut dire, renforcée avec en 2015 avec l'instauration du régime des paiements verts, qui est un régime de paiement du premier pilier de la PAC. Il y a des exigences à respecter pour les exploitants entre 2015 et 2022 au titre du paiement vert et donc cette architecture verte, ce verdissement, est encore plus renforcée avec la PAC réformée 2023-2027, en cohérence avec le portefeuille vert de l'Union européenne, les stratégies associées de biodiversités pour donner lieu à l'éco régime. Ce qu'on remarque déjà, c'est un renforcement au cours de ces 25 dernières années, un renforcement des exigences environnementales et un renforcement de l'architecture verte au niveau de la PAC et des exploitations agricoles.

C'était la première réflexion qui me venait à l'esprit. Pour revenir à votre question, sur le coeur du sujet, déjà je vais pas répondre forcément à toutes vos questions car je les ai découverte il y a quelques heures et certaines demandent beaucoup de travail de recherche

Comment la France définit le verdissement de l'agriculture ? La France l'a définie sous la forme d'un paiement découplé uniforme versé tous les ans sur des hectares admissibles de l'exploitation pour les exploitations agricoles qui se sont engagés volontairement à mettre en place, sur l'ensemble de l'exploitation, des pratiques agronomiques favorables au climat et à l'environnement. Donc L'éco-régime pour la France ça a donné lieu à trois voies d'accès différentes et un bonus vert que vous donnez connaître : la voie des pratiques, la voie des certifications et la voie des éléments favorable à la biodiversité.

Comment la France l'a définit ? Elle l'a définit par des décrets, des arrêtés ministériels, mais en cohérence avec les règlements européens.

Quels sont les documents qui constituent la source officielle de la définition et de la stratégie de verdissement de la France ? Je vous invite à consulter le site du Ministère de l'Agriculture. Le site où vous avez toutes les documentations officielles pour la PAC 2023-2027 et les éco-régimes : <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/la-pac-2023-2027-en-un-coup-doeil>. Vous aurez la législation nationales qui définit l'éco-régime

2. S'agit-il de la même vision que celle de la Commission ? Comment la vision de l'écologisation de la France s'aligne-t-elle sur celle de la Commission ?

La Commission n'a pas de vision spécifique sur le verdissement sauf erreur de ma part. L'éco-régime est un aspect important, c'est un régime important que les États membres doivent obligatoirement mettre en place mais les exploitants agricoles ne sont pas obligés d'y souscrire. En France, c'est la voie des pratiques, la voie des certifications et la voie des éléments favorables à la biodiversité. Comment la France a fait pour mettre en place son éco-régime ? D'abord, elle l'a fait en cohérence avec les règlements communautaires, c'est le plan stratégique, le règlement 2021_2115, du 2 décembre 2021, qui est axé sur les plans stratégiques nationaux. Je vous invite à lire attentivement l'article 16 de ce règlement relatif au type d'intervention que les États doivent mettre en place financé par le FEDER et Fonds européen agricole de garantie (FEAGA) et plus encore l'article 31 qui parle des programmes pour le climat, l'environnement et le bien être animal et qui fixe des règles communes aux 27 États membres pour définir leurs éco-régimes en fonction des stratégies, de leurs propres stratégies nationales, en fonction de leurs objectifs, en fonction des résultats du diagnostics partager avec toutes les parties prenantes, c'est-à-dire les Régions, avec les organisations professionnelles agricoles, avec les ONG, le Ministère de la Transition écologique et de la Cohésion des Territoires etc. La commission européenne, elle, fixe des règles communes à l'intérieur duquel les États membres créent leurs architecture vertes mais en prenant soin de fixer des règles communes, par exemple au niveau des définitions, au niveau des seuils de financements outils comme par exemple les éco-régimes doivent représenter à minima les premières années 25% du total des paiements directs du premier pilier de la PAC. On ne peut pas dire qu'il y a une vision du verdissement de la CE et une autre de la France. Non. Une grande nouveauté de la PAC réformée 2023-2027, c'est le Pacte stratégique national, et la subsidiarité qui va avec. C'est-à-dire la Commission a donc donné aux États membres le soin de définir, par eux-mêmes, leurs propres priorités à condition que ces priorités répondent et soient en ligne avec les objectifs de la PAC et tout en tenant en compte les besoins spécifiques des États membres. La Commission ne dit pas quelle vision de l'écologisation doit être mise en place, on a affaire à une PAC qui donne beaucoup plus de flexibilité.

3. Quelles sont les priorités de la France en matière de verdissement de l'agriculture ?

Les priorités de la France sont plurielles, ce n'est pas d'accès à toute la politique nationale sur l'écologisation mais sur les performances environnementales et climatiques de l'agriculture. Aussi sur les performances économiques de l'agriculture car l'agriculture française doit être une agriculture compétitive et qui procure au pays une souveraineté alimentaire de manière qu'on ne soit pas obligé d'importer des denrées alimentaires de pays tiers s'ils ne respectent pas les normes environnementales et sociales. C'est aussi une performance sociale au travers par exemple de la mise en place, auquel la France a beaucoup contribué, de la conditionnalité sociale, harmoniser les droits sociaux des travailleurs de l'agriculture. Le soucis de la France était de répondre à ce triple enjeux : environnemental, économique et social et ce triple enjeux c'est pas autre chose que les trois dimensions de la durabilité qui figure dans les préfaces et dans les textes des actes de base de la PAC réformé, c'est-à-dire le règlement plan stratégique, règlement horizontal, et le règlement omnibus. Ces trois règlements qui fixent les règles de la PAC réformée, ce qu'il y a de commun dans ces textes est le remboursement de la durabilité comprise comme durabilité économique, environnementale et sociale. Donc la durabilité de l'agriculture forme un tout, on ne peut pas isoler la seule durabilité environnementale au détriment de la durabilité économique ou sociale. Ces trois éléments marchent ensemble

4. Quelle est la stratégie utilisée par la France pendant les négociations de la PAC ?

Je suis arrivé au SGAE il y a environ 2 ans et demi lorsque les négociations politiques de la réforme de la PAC venait, ou allait se conclure. Je suis arrivé au mois de mars/avril et l'accord a eu lieu le 21 juin 2021. Je n'ai pas participé aux négociations de la France au niveau de la PAC. Ce sont des négociations qui ont duré au moins 5 ans, c'est la raison pour laquelle la PAC n'a pas été mis en oeuvre en 2021 comme ça aurait dû l'être mais en 2023 (2 ans de retard) avec une période de transition qui fait que la PAC réformée sera mise en oeuvre seulement pour 5 ans alors que la programmation habituelle de la PAC c'est 7 ans. La France défend une vision pour une PAC exigeante qui offre un cadre commun, uniformisé aux 27 États membres et de manière à assurer et réussir la transition agro-écologique du secteur agricole

5. Quels sont les pays alliés (ou similaires) à la France dans les négociations sur la PAC ?

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6. Où et comment se sont déroulées les négociations sur le verdissement ?

Elle participe en tant que Membres de droit à toutes les instances de négociations qui débattent de la PAC et des nombreux sujets portés par la réforme de la PAC à tous les niveaux : comité d'expert à Bruxelles, au niveau du comité spécial agricole, COREPER. Le comité spécial agricole (CSA) et COREPER se réunissent toutes les semaines pour préparer les réunions des ministres de l'agriculture des 27, qui ont lieu une fois par mois. c'est donc au sein de ces instances que se construit, se forge, des compromis, des consensus, à partir des positions défendues par la France au travers du travail diplomatique habituels, qui passent par des non-papiers rédigé par des autorités françaises, papiers envoyés dans les capitales européennes pour recueillir le soutien de ces autres capitales et pouvoir arriver devant la commission en disant : voilà notre demande de simplification de de la PAC ou notre demande de créer une conditionnalité sociale, qui est un concept inédit dans la PAC, est portée par la France et aussi 13/14/18/20 États membres. C'est un travail de diplomatie agricole qui se fait au quotidien par la Représentation française de l'UE à Bruxelles en liaison avec le SGAE, en liaison avec les ministères concernés et en liaison avec le cabinet du premier ministre auquel le SGAE est rattaché.

7. Quelle stratégie la France utilise-t-elle pour mettre en œuvre ses priorités en matière de verdissement et convaincre les autres États membres de l'UE ?

C'est une question qui appartient au passé, les négociations se sont terminées avec une politique conclue en juin 2021 et nous sommes en novembre 2023. c'est des stratégies, c'est au travers de son action diplomatique/d'influence, de relations bilatérale qu'elle entretient avec des pays affinitaire, et sur la base d'un non papiers : c'est un document qui est destiné à asseoir les positions d'un État membre et à faire rallier des États membres mais

une fois que ce non-papier a circulé dans les capitales, il peut devenir une communication/ une note des autorités françaises ou un courrier cosigné par plusieurs États membres etc. Les moyens d'actions de la France pour défendre les intérêts généraux agricoles sont pluriels et variés.

8. Quelles ont été les questions les plus sensibles ?

Je peux pas vous répondre car j'ai pas participé aux négociations.

9. Pensez-vous que le budget de la PAC adopté par l'UE est de plus en plus proche de la vision défendue par la France ?

La France a réussi à maintenir le budget de la PAC au titre 2023-2027, à peu près. La France est le premier bénéficiaire de la PAC avec une enveloppe d'un peu plus de 9 milliards d'euros par an financée au titre du FEAGA, au titre de FEDER. A côté il y a aussi d'autres sources de financement, extérieur à la PAC, qui viennent financer et appuyer la transition du secteur agricole vers une dimension plus verte comme des crédits de France relance ou de France 2030 ou d'autre enveloppe.

10. La stratégie française d'écologisation de l'agriculture a-t-elle été consultée par d'autres parties prenantes de l'agriculture (organisations d'agriculteurs, ONG environnementales, instituts scientifiques, etc.) ?

C'est tout le travail d'impacton, les textes européens font obligation aux États membres préalablement à la rédaction de leurs plans stratégiques nationaux de conduire un diagnostic et une consultation publique de très grande envergure. En France, cette consultation a fait l'objet de débats publics auxquels ont été conviés le public, les ONG, les OPA, les régions, les ministères et les particuliers. De cette consultation publique est sorti plus de 10000 avis/recommandations. Sur la base de celle-ci, les autorités françaises ont élaboré le plan stratégique national qui décrit les interventions de la PAC, interventions qui ont été définies pour répondre aux besoins identifiés par toutes les parties prenantes et les parties prenantes à ce débat. Tout en respectant les grandes orientations fixées par les textes de bases de PAC réformée. La PAC 2023-2027 a été construite sur une dynamique de consultation

d'envergure qu'on a jamais vu, qui est inouïe. Vous allez le trouver sur le site du ministère de l'agriculture