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**Agro economic policy analysis of the new member states,
the candidate states and the countries of the western Balkans**

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Overview of
**THE ACTIVITY OF SCIENTISTS
& THE DEMAND FOR SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE
IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY**

In 2005, in the new member states, in the candidate states and the countries of the western Balkans

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The project aims to establish a network of experts involved in agricultural policy analysis and rural development in the New Member States, in the Acceding Candidate Countries and in the countries of the Western Balkan. More detailed information on the project can be found at www.agripolicy.net.

This report aims at providing information on the use of scientific input in the formulation of agricultural policy in the New Member States, the Candidate Countries and the countries of the Western Balkans.

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CONTENT

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
2	HOW ARE EXTERNAL SCIENTISTS INVOLVED IN THE FORMULATION OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY?.....	5
2.1	AT NATIONAL LEVEL.....	5
2.2	AT EU LEVEL.....	9
3	FOR WHICH TOPICS EXPERTS HAVE BEEN CONSULTED IN 2005?.....	10
3.1	NATIONAL PRIORITIES.....	10
3.2	EU PRIORITIES.....	10
3.3	INTERNATIONAL PRIORITIES.....	12
4	WHICH TOPICS HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED BY RESEARCHERS IN 2005?.....	14
4.1	AGRIPOLICY.NET DATABASE.....	14
4.2	TRENDS INDICATED BY THE EXPERTS.....	15
5	CONCLUSIONS.....	17

1 Introduction

The objectives of this report are to describe:

- To which extent scientists from the New Member States and Candidate Countries have been involved in the formulation of agricultural policies.
- For which topics there has been a need for scientific support.
- Which research topics have been addressed by scientists involved in agricultural policies in the CEEC.

The report covers policies related to agricultural markets and rural development. Policies related to food hygiene, food security, animal or human health are not covered by the report. The geographical scope is the New Member States (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), the Candidate countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey) as well as countries from the Western Balkan (Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia Montenegro). The period covered is the year 2005.

The report starts with a description of how external experts (from research institutes, NGOs, universities and independent consultancy firms) have been involved in the formulation of agricultural policies at EU level and for each NMS, Candidate Countries and Countries from the Western Balkan. It then provides a description of the topics for which organisation in charge of the formulation or the implementation of agricultural policies asked for external assistance. Finally it presents the main research topics addressed by experts in the year 2005. The conclusions provide an assessment of the co-operation between policy-makers and scientific experts. The report is accompanied by annexes providing further details on the studies financed by public bodies in 2005.

The report is mainly based on a consultation of the members of CEECAP: a questionnaire has been sent to each contractor of the project. The experts registered in Agripolicy.net database have also been consulted. Information on European research programmes (calls for proposals of the FP6 theme “Scientific Support to Policy”, tenders launched by DG Agriculture, PHARE and TACIS programme) has also been collected to identify the research topics addressed at EU level. Finally, the publications reported in agripolicy.net database has been explored to identify the trends in the research topics covered by the agricultural scientists in 2005.

2 How are external scientists involved in the formulation of agricultural policy?

2.1 At national level

To assess the involvement of external scientists to support policy makers in each country, the first questions of the questionnaire state whether co-operation exists in the countries or not. If so, what method was used by public bodies to obtain scientific assistance in formulating or assessing policies.

Table 1. Answers to the survey sent to the Agripolicy experts database.

	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Estonia	Hungary	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Slovakia	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	Turkey	Croatia	Bosnia Herzegovina	Serbia and Montenegro
<i>How many respondents answered the questionnaire ?</i>	1	1	2	2	0	1	2	3	2	1	4	4	1	1	1
1. In 2005, did any public bodies ask for scientific expertise through															
Competitive tender (publicly advertised) for specific study (delivery of a report) ?															
Direct contract (non-competitive) for specific study (delivery of a report) ?															
Direct consultation (free of charge) for specific study (delivery of a report) ?															
Direct consultation (free of charge) for specific advise ?															
Establishment of expert group, working groups or think tank ?															
The organisation of conference, debate or workshop ?															
1. In 2005, did any public bodies organise															
Evaluation (impact assessment) of an existing policy ?															
Evaluation (impact assessment) of a future policy (or policy options) ?															
Studies on a specific issue															

Caption:

	Yes
	Not clear
	No
	N.A.

Experts registered in agripolicy.net database have been asked to assess the level of co-operation that exists between scientific experts and agricultural policy makers. Only 27 experts from 14 countries answered the questionnaire. The questionnaire used is given in annexe 3 of the report. The results are presented in the following table. It is important to keep in mind that the analysis given is only based on a few person's points of view.

Table 2. Overview of the co-operation between policy-makers and scientific experts.

Bosnia	EXPERTS ARE OCCASIONALLY ASKED TO TAKE PART IN POLICY FORMULATION OR EVALUATION. MINISTRIES AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES SOMETIMES CALL FOR A REPORT, OR ORGANISE A CONSULTATION.
Bulgaria	Although public consultations are organised with external experts to prepare or to assess policies, co-operation in Bulgaria is still weak. Ministry of agriculture, the presidency as well as the parliament use scientific experts advises to prepare a report on a specific subject.
Croatia	Co-operation is mainly active to answer specific subjects. Mostly, expertise is asked for preparation of new acts and policy. Ex post analysis are not organised.
Cyprus	The ministry of agriculture, natural resources and Environment and the planning bureau ask for reports to experts. They also organise working groups and conferences to promote the involvement of scientists in the policy making process. Several PhD graduates work at the agricultural research institute that provide scientific reports or take part in steering committees or committees investigating the effectiveness of a policy.
Czech republic	According to the questionnaires received, co-operation between experts and policy makers in Czech Republic is not intense. An experts group from the ministry of agriculture and an international conference on rural development helped providing the policy makers with scientific expertise's.
Estonia	The reports indicate that the scientific consultations are organised internally in Estonia. They can be organised by lobbying groups (Farmers unions, Tourism organisation) or by governmental organisations (ministries of agriculture, of economy, local municipalities). The requests are very specific.
Hungary	Ministry of agriculture has his own research centre (Institute for Agricultural Economics) to prepare relevant policy actions and this institute theoretically involves independent experts. Although scientific organisations considered as background institutions support decision makers, external advises from independent scientists are not sought.
Lithuania	Lithuanian experts report excellent co-operation between scientists and policy makers. Ministry of agriculture regularly order a study to universities or research institute. In 2005, more than 90 studies were sponsored. 4 of them dealt with agricultural policies.
Latvia	
Slovenia	Although it has declined since accession, co-operations between experts and policy makers remains good. It used to be very intense, but it is now restricted to specific project or problems orientated.
Slovakia	Although several studies and conferences in the field of agricultural policies were publicly organised by governmental organisation, experts report that the interaction between science and policies is insufficient. Slovak Ministry of Land Management, Parliament, Agricultural Chamber and the research institute of agricultural and food economics are requiring external scientific advices.
Romania	Policy makers do not really take experts advises into account. Some studies may be requested but scientists do not see their recommendations applied.

Poland	The scientific community has recently become very active and a number of studies and research projects have been carried out in the field of rural development. However, there is disappointingly little interest in the outcome of these studies, even if they are formally paid from public funds - officials of Ministries, Paying Agencies and other public bodies seldom take part in conferences presenting study results and it is rare to see them commission such studies themselves. The most disappointing thing is that the recommendations from these studies are hardly ever taken into account in the policy making process. Experts are sometimes invited – without payment - into working groups but their opinion is seldom taken into account in the final documents. Any attempt e.g. from lower-level officials to invite paid experts to develop programming materials and other expertise is denied by the high-level officials in the Ministry.
Turkey	Turkish experts are satisfied of the level of co-operation between experts and policy-makers. Public bodies organise conferences and ask for expertise on specific topics. Apparently several policy makers are former scientists.
Serbia and Montenegro	Responding Serbian expert have never been involved in any national consultation thus they have a bad opinion of the co-operation.. Co-operation is often stimulated by international organisations.

In the table 3, the ranking corresponds to the perception of the co-operation researchers may have. The answers given in the questionnaire enable to have an idea on the satisfaction of the researchers regarding their involvement in policy-formulation. The third column summarises the reasons that justify the ranking.

Table 3. Aggregation of the results: assessment of the co-operation quality

	Evaluation of the quality of the co-operation	
Cyprus		Scientific support is only asked internally
Czech Republic		
Estonia		Scientific support is only asked internally
Hungary		Scientific support is only asked internally
Latvia		
Lithuania		Excellent opinion
Poland		Advice are not taken into account
Slovakia		Not sufficient
Slovenia		Has declined since EU accession
Bulgaria		Not sufficient
Romania		Not sufficient
Turkey		Occasionally
Croatia		Specific topics
Bosnia Herzegovina		Occasionally
Serbia and Montenegro		Never been involved

Please note that these results reflect only a few experts views.

Caption: Quality of the co-operation between scientists and policy makers

	Good
	Medium
	Weak
	N.A.

2.2 At EU level

Two main mechanisms are used by the European Commission (EC) to give scientific mandate to external experts. The EC regularly launches “call for tenders” as well as “call for proposals” under the Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP.)

2.2.1 Tenders of the Directorate-general for Agriculture

The directorate-General for Agriculture (DG Agri) can launch tenders to study a specific question that requires a comprehensive analysis. Tenders mainly aim at evaluating European programmes before or after their application (Ex-post or ex-ante evaluation). The reports can be used as an input to prepare the reform of a European programme (ex: Evaluation of the Common market organisation for the cereals sector). In the case of ex-ante evaluation, the studies look at the possible impacts of a major change in the agricultural sector (ex: Impact of EU accession of Balkans countries on the Common Agricultural policy). The tenderer plays the role of external evaluators. Tenders for the year 2005 are listed in annexe 1.

2.2.2 Scientific Support to Policies (SSP) of the sixth Framework Programme (FP6)

This programme serves policy decision-making process through the funding of specific projects. It aims at supporting the formulation and implementation of Community policies, including the common agricultural policy (CAP). The total indicative budget of the call scientific support to policies SSP-5A in 2005 reached 77 millions € which is roughly the 2004 budget. The call is organised in several priorities that address different research areas. The priorities are listed below:

- *Sustainable management of Europe’s natural resources’*
- *Providing health, security and opportunity to the people of Europe’*
- *Underpinning the economic potential and cohesion of a larger and more integrated European Union’.*

Each priority addresses several areas called, with specific instruments (STREP, CA or SSA). The two last priorities have few to do with agricultural policies. The annexe 2 lists the contents of the call in 2005.

3 For which topics experts have been consulted in 2005?

3.1 National priorities

In the questionnaire presented in the annexe 3, respondents were asked to identify the scientific needs expressed by policy makers. They indicated the 7th most important topics for which policy-makers needed scientific support. The results of the survey are synthesised per country. Some priorities are common to all country, such as implementing the CAP or developing the rural areas.

Table 4. Topics for which policy-makers needed scientific support per country.

Bosnia	Country priorities encompass many diverse subjects ranging from specific sectors studies to farmers incomes or assurance systems.
Bulgaria	Impacts of introducing the CAP and diversification of activities to develop rural areas are perceived as being the most important needs for policy-makers.
Croatia	Few topics are considered as priorities apart from rural development issues and subsidies.
Cyprus	Cypriot experts are requested to support policy makers on specific sector issues (potatoes, fruits and vegetables, cereals...). The impact of enlargement is also a key priority.
Czech republic	
Estonia	Estonian priorities aim at supporting the diversification and investments in rural areas. There is also a need to develop the fishery sector
Hungary	The competitiveness of agriculture in Hungary and sector impacts of enlargement receive most interest from public bodies. Rural employment is also under study.
Lithuania	Lithuanian policy-makers are interested in assessing the impacts of the enlargement on agriculture competitiveness and specific sectors.
Latvia	
Slovenia	Experts consider that ex ante and ex post analysis of agricultural policies related to enlargement and competitiveness are the topics for which policy makers need more scientific support. The issues of multifunctionality of agriculture as well as environmental concerns begin to raise.
Slovakia	Competitiveness of agriculture in order to improve rural incomes is an important topic currently in Slovakia.
Romania	Experts do not mention any specific scientific need apart from the impact of enlargement or the competitiveness of Romanian agriculture.
Poland	Polish experts are very active in the field of rural development policy analysis.
Turkey	Many Turkish experts answered the questionnaire. The answers are very diversified ranging from food safety to farmers income. Marketing agricultural products is always identified as a need to support policy makers.
Serbia and Montenegro	In Serbia and Montenegro priorities relate to rural development policies. Competitiveness and impact of enlargement are also important needs to support policy makers.

3.2 EU priorities

This section summarises the topics for which the EC launched call for tenders and call for proposal in 2005.

Regarding the calls for tenders (see detailed information in Annex 1), many of the analyse aims at evaluating the impact of Common Market Organisations (cocoa and vegetable fats, cereals, flax and hemp, fruits and vegetables, etc.). These evaluations contribute to prepare the reform of common market organisations. A group of studies deals with assessment of rural development measures, including Leader +, SAPARD and rural development indicators implementation. Environmental issues are also addressed in studies dealing with impact assessment programmes.

Concerning the call for proposals under the FP6 theme “Scientific Support to Policies”, one call has been published in 2005. The call was divided into 3 priorities (see annex 2 for details):

Sustainable management of Europe’s natural resources

The Common Agricultural Policy has been reformed in 2003. The new measures have been implemented in January 2005. There is a need to support the new CAP implementation to adopt new strategies in farm. Agriculture needs to be modernised and to shift towards a more market orientated agriculture. Another topic addressed concern rural development and promotion of multifunctional agriculture. A few tasks are dedicated to the development of organic agriculture.

In regards to the international market rules and the World Trade Organisation negotiations (Doha development agenda), there is a need for understanding the modalities of liberalisation of farm trade in Europe. Impact of the negotiations on non EU countries is to be studied. The tools and methods associated to these research projects should be developed.

In its proposal for a new framework regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Commission has defined the scope of the CFP as being to ensure exploitation of living aquatic resources, which provides sustainable environmental, economic and social conditions. This goal can not be reached without support from the scientific community for better fisheries management. This includes numerous research projects in relation with fishing monitoring, fisheries health protection and disease prevention, environmental protection of marine ecosystems, which can be sum up with the topic: scientific consequences of fishing.

Another major area deals with environmental friendly agriculture, especially with animal production system. There is a request to develop new tools and methods to improve animal welfare and health. Most of the tasks proposed relate to specific animal diseases. The goal is to reach a better level of food security and safety.

In the frame of the implementation of the 6th environmental technologies action plan, several environmental programmes are being launched. Thus they need scientific basis to support decisions. Tools and methods are developed that aim at decoupling growth from environmental damage. A special attention is devoted to market dynamics of eco-innovation.

Providing health, security and opportunity to the people of Europe’

Most of the areas addressed in this priority do not relate to agriculture. The tasks of interest in regard to our project concern environmental issues. In this field, some tasks aim at studying the health implications of environmental stressors such as noises or electro-magnetic fields (EMF). Economic valuation is being made to measure the monetary impact of environmental degradation.

Call SSP 2B

The second call SSP 2B exclusively relate to avian influenza that threatens European poultry as well as human health. It can be separated in two parts: one section is devoted to the development of new tools and methods to anticipate an epidemic, whereas another one aims at expanding the pool of knowledge acquired so far.

3.3 International priorities

The activity reports of international organisations give an overview of the topics addressed by these organisations. The main studies are reported here as they are an indicator of the key topics

OECD activity report

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

IN 2005, THE OECD CARRIED OUT A RANGE OF ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION ON ISSUES RELATED TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PARTICULARLY ON ENHANCING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF POLICIES IN THE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SPHERES. THE ROUND TABLE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE OECD IN 2005 GATHERED 8 MINISTERS FROM OECD AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, ALONG WITH HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES FROM COMPANIES REPRESENTING THE SECTORS CHOSEN FOR ANALYSIS, INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE SPHERE AND NGOS. THE QUESTION DISCUSSED AT THE 2005 MEETING DEALT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE: "CAN TRANSNATIONAL SECTORAL AGREEMENTS HELP REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS?"

ENVIRONMENT:

The major change in 2005 was the Kyoto protocol that came into force under which most OECD countries committed to targets to limit or reduce their emissions.

Several areas of OECD work in 2005 focused on environmental and development issues relating to water. In November, environment ministries of OECD and countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) met to discuss progress made since adopting guiding principles on reform of the urban water supply and sanitation sector in the EECCA in 2000. A workshop was held in Australia in late 2005 and reviewed current and future policy options to address water resource use and water quality issues in agriculture. Among the subjects that were addressed by OECD to study our impact on the environment: (Business and the environment, environmentally harmful subsidies, chemical safety...), one of them was dedicated to environment and agriculture, and impact of agriculture on biodiversity.

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

The OECD provided in 2005 timely support to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations at the World Trade Organisation, as well as to policy makers throughout the OECD as they seek to identify efficient and equitable policy solutions to the problems facing the sector. Agriculture is a key component of the DDA.

Studies published by OECD in 2005 particularly paid attention to the level of support to agriculture in OECD countries. The annual estimates of support and protection levels focuses on agriculture support measures, whereas a specific report looks at the government transfer to fisheries.

A document has been prepared jointly with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to give a looking-forward analysis on agricultural trade in the world.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

FAO regularly disseminates, through its "State of ... " publications, the most recent world-wide information and analyses on major topics of its competence - food and agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, forests, food insecurity.

In 2005, 3 such reports were published by the FAO, to give a picture of the state of Food and agriculture (SOFA), world's forest (SOFO) and food insecurity in the world (SOFI).

SOFA - Agricultural trade and poverty: Can trade work for the poor?

The report examines the many ways in which trade liberalisation and agricultural trade affect the poor and food-insecure. Trade can be a catalyst for change, promoting conditions that enable the poor to raise their incomes and live longer, healthier and more productive lives, but these positive results are not guaranteed. The poor are particularly vulnerable in any reform process, especially in the short run as productive sectors and labour markets adjust. Complementary policy measures are needed to enable the poor to take advantage of the opportunities offered by trade, and safety nets are required to protect the most vulnerable from trade-related shocks.

SOFO - Realising the economic benefits from forests

Now in its sixth edition, the state of world's forest 2005 presents a global picture of the forest sector, providing the latest information on activities and developments. Contributions from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), individuals in their personal capacity and FAO highlight challenges and opportunities related to some of today's key emerging issues. The theme of the 2005 edition recognises that the economic viability of the forest sector is a prerequisite to safeguarding the environmental, social and cultural functions of the resource.

SOFI - Eradicating world hunger - key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The state of food insecurity in the world reports on global and national efforts to reach the goal set by the 1996 World Food Summit: to reduce by half the number of undernourished people in the world by the year 2015.

4 Which topics have been addressed by researchers in 2005?

4.1 AgriPolicy.net database

In the frame of the European project Agripolicy, a database has been developed to connect researchers of eastern Europe working on agricultural economics and policies. More than 300 researchers registered in the database in June 2006.

Each researchers indicated the list of subjects studies over the past 5 years. This list was analysed to extract the subjects most studied by the researchers community of central and eastern Europe countries (CEEC) in 2005. The objective is to identify the topics of agricultural and food economics that receive more interests from the scientific community.

Table 5. Research topics addressed by experts registered in AgriPolicy database in 2005

	Number of articles/ project related to this topic	Percentage of articles : Project related to this topic
Rural development	41	16%
Markets	28	11%
Enlargement	18	7%
Food quality	11	4%
Policy	11	4%
Model	11	4%
CAP	10	4%
Investment	10	4%
Multifunctional agriculture	9	3%

In accordance with the expectations, many subjects relate to rural development in CEEC. There is a significant gap between EU-15 farm productivity and CEEC farms. With the 10 New Member states, the arable land in Europe rose by 30%, whereas the farmers population rose by 60%. The production in the EU should expand by about 10-20%. These figures reflect that there are major differences in term of farming system. Family farms will suffer from the enlargement, because they will not be competitive enough.

Many subjects relate to **problems faced by CEEC farmers** while competing on the European market. Thus, 41 subjects concerning rural developments, 28 give a markets analysis, 18 about enlargements, 8 about competitiveness, 6 about family farms, 9 about multifunctional agriculture were found in the database... Improving productivity appears to be a major issue for CEEC researchers.

Topics can be grouped into two categories both related to integration of CEEC into the European common market: **competitiveness**, and implementation of **policies**. Important efforts are put into the gain of competitiveness. Some researchers have been working on strategies that could be developed to increase farm competitiveness. In this category, topics related to market analysis are gathered, investments and rural development. Market analysis helps understanding how to market is organised. The other topics listed aims at proposing new strategies to remain competitive at the European level. Many topics relate to **food quality issues**. This topic is another problem that farmers have to face to remain competitive. The

food producers have to implement HACCP methods, and meet certain safety standards to sell their production on the European market.

Some researchers focus their work on **new policies** that need to be implemented before/during the accession process. Thus many subjects were related to common agricultural policies issues, and its application in CEEC. 17 subjects concern enlargement and 10 were focused on policy analysis. Some subjects concern land and land reform.

Eventually, a group of topics are similar to **world-wide issues** concerning agricultural and food economics and policies. This category includes all the subjects dealing with consumer's behaviour (5), sustainable agriculture (7), ecological and organic farming (9), employment, gender, fertilisers use, environmental issues...

4.2 Trends indicated by the experts

In the questionnaire sent to the experts registered in the database, experts are asked to give the list of subjects for which public bodies required scientific support. It was asked to provide the list of tenders and calls related to agricultural policy launched at a national scale. The complete list of calls and tenders indicated by the respondents of the survey is given in the annexe 4.

Table 6. Areas called by national public bodies

Bosnia	LAND MANAGEMENT AND LAND REFORM
Bulgaria	Implementing the CAP
Croatia	Consultation on the National Program for agriculture and rural areas.
Cyprus	Analysing the rural development plan.
Czech republic	
Estonia	Need for supporting the rural entrepreneur sector.
Hungary	Study on the sugar sector
Lithuania	Modelling rural development policy. Loan and credit facilities
Latvia	
Slovenia	CAP reform, Environmental concerns in agricultural policy, new agricultural policies.
Slovakia	Assessing the impact of EU accession. Changes in support measures.
Romania	Evaluating SAPARD programme . Milling and bakery industry analysis
Poland	Consultation on the National Strategic plan. Grants were awarded to measure the competitiveness of the agricultural and food sector in Poland after EU accession.
Turkey	Rural development -
Serbia and Montenegro	

5 Conclusions

The first objective of this study was to provide an overview of the links between the scientific community and the institutions in charge of policy design or implementation. The following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The level of co-operation vary significantly from one country to another, with cooperation appearing to be weaker in the Western Balkan Countries and stronger in other countries like Cyprus, Lithuania or Slovenia.
2. Overall, the scientists consider that the quality of the cooperation is medium: out of 13 countries, only one evaluated the quality of the co-operation as very good.
3. In many countries, studies are implemented by institutional bodies that belong to or are in close relation with the Ministries. This situation raises the question of independence of the expertise provided. The low number of public procurements (tenders) in the Member States also indicates that transparency could be improved.
4. A major concern of the scientists is the extend to which the outcome of the studies are taken into account. It seems to be a common problem in many New Member States. Scientific advises should not systematically be followed by decision makers but there is a need to better monitor the impact of the outcome of the studies. Increasing the “formalism” of the procedure (with the publication of tenders or the use of detailed specifications) may contribute to solve this problem.
5. Finally, it appears that at EU level, the European Commission has a very formalised relation with scientists through call for tenders and call for proposals of the programme “Scientific Support to Policy”. The independence of the expertise seems stronger but the extend to which the results are utilised has been addressed in this study.

The second objective was to analyse the topics for which there has been a need for scientific supports and the topics covered by the scientists. The main findings are as follow:

6. In the New Member States and Pre Candidate Countries, it seems that priority is given to two major subjects: the impact of the accession and rural development. The impact of the accession is mostly treated from the point of view of the competitiveness. Studies related to Rural Development issues encompass a large spectrum of subjects ranging from diversification of activities, to rural employment or rural income. The need of assistance for the design of Rural Development Programmes may explain the importance of these topics.
7. The priorities at EU level, reflected by the content of the call for tenders and call for proposals are two fold: evaluation of policy on one end (for the tenders) and support for the implementation of the new CAP with an emphasis on sustainability and environmental aspects (for the call for proposals). Compared to national priorities, the emphasis on the competitiveness is much weaker.
8. The priorities of international organisations (reflected by the reports published by OECD or FAO) shows a greater interest for sustainable development and environmental questions (including climate change).

9. When looking at the activities reported by the scientists (reflected both by the expert views and by the topics of publications reported in agripolicy database), rural development and market issues arise as the main topics. Very few activities related to sustainable development or the environment are reported.

10. Two major conclusions can be drawn from these findings:

- **There is no gap between the activities of the scientists and the need expressed at national level:** the emphasis is given to rural development and competitiveness issues.
- **There is an important gap between the activities of the scientists from the New Member States and Candidate Countries and the needs expressed at European and international level.** The key challenges identified at EU and international levels are related to sustainable development and environmental questions (including climate change). These topics seem to be poorly addressed by the scientific community from the NMS, CC and PCC.