

Agriculture

What do I need to know before I start?

The Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957, not only established the Common Market but also laid out the general objectives of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Agricultural policy is addressed in Articles 38 to 46 of the Treaty, which articulate key aims such as increasing agricultural productivity, establishing uniform standards for farming, and ensuring stable and reasonable prices for consumers. These foundational principles were further elaborated and defined at the [Stresa Conference](#) in July 1958. The Council adopted the first regulation concerning the CAP in January 1962, after extensive negotiations and deliberations among the institutions and member states. The main architect of Europe's agriculture policy was the Dutch European Commissioner [Sicco Mansholt](#) and the significance of agriculture reflected across various EU bodies, movement, organizations and initiatives, highlighting its foundational role in the broader project of European integration.

As one of the European Union's earliest and most enduring policy areas, the CAP was designed to create a single market in agricultural products and to ensure financial solidarity through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). It became fully operational in July 1968.

Languages:

Please note that most documents available in our Archives are in French, English, or German, some may also be in other official EU languages. To verify the languages used in a particular fond, please consult our holdings page. Additionally, some fonds may include a few files in languages not specified in the description.

What can I find at the HAEU?

Together with the EU institutions, it is possible to find individual fonds, corporate bodies and various extracts from private collections and agencies. Moreover, the HAEU has an extensive body of interviews that you can find in our Oral History repository. In the following list you can find some indications where to start when investigating agricultural-policy-related dossiers and documents in our fonds:

1) [EU institutions](#)

[Council of Ministers](#)

Agricultural matters discussed in the Council of Ministers are assembled in a section on agricultural activities: "[Activités de la CEE : Agriculture](#)". The fonds of the Council of Ministers

being organized by years, you need to browse the sub-fonds of each separate year to access the specific section on agriculture (for example here [the year 1968](#)).

European Commission

The Commission fonds – and by extension that of the Directorates-General-, are divided into two distinct parts: the first refer to the period preceding the Merger Treaty ([Commission](#) of the European Economic Community, 1958–1967), and the second to the period following its entry into force ([European Commission](#) from 1967 onwards).

In the Commission's fonds, you will find a specific section for the **DG VI Agriculture** ([1958-1967](#) and [from 1967](#)). The CAP is also discussed in the context of commercial relations in the section for the **DG V External relations** ([1958-1967](#) and [1967-2011](#)).

The agricultural policy was an important matter of discussion in the Enlargement process: you can find relevant documents on this topic searching in the fond [Enlargissement and Voisinage](#) in the sub-fonds “[Préparations et négociation d'adhésion](#)” and in the related dossiers ([here one as example](#)).

Significant information directly related to the agricultural sector and policy can also be found in the **DG XIV - Marché intérieur et rapprochement des législations (Direction C) 1968 - 1972**, in regards to the harmonization of the common market ([an example](#) here) or linked to the cooperation with international organizations ([for example with Food and Agricultural Organization - FAO](#)). In the same way, especially after the late 1970s, agricultural policies and regulations were discussed as well in the **DG XI - Environnement, protection des consommateurs et sécurité nucléaire (1981 - 1988)**, as in the use of pesticides and [nitrates](#).

In addition, you might want to look into the sections on the [Secretariat-General](#) which also contains [the minutes](#) of the weekly Commission. Here, you can also find the [“Coreper \(Comité des représentants permanents\) : procès-verbaux”](#). In the same way, you can find relevant information under **Cabinets Ortoli; Jenkins; Thorn and Delors**.

It should be noted, when researching the fonds, that the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) were considered equally applicable to the fisheries sector. From 1968 onwards, responsibility for fisheries policy fell under Directorate-General VI (Agriculture), specifically through its “Fisheries Products Division.” However, in 1977, a separate Directorate-General for Fisheries (DG XIV) was formally established, and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was launched at the beginning of 1983. You can find the Research Guide on Fisheries [here](#).

European Parliament

The EP'S fonds is divided by different legislatures. Here you can find the proceedings and the reports of the parliamentary committee for agriculture in two sections: the “[**Commission de l'agriculture**](#)” before the direct election and during the Parliament's [first legislature](#) (1979-1984); and “**Commission de l'agriculture, de la pêche et du développement rural**” for the [second legislature](#) (1984 – 1989), [third legislature](#) (1989 – 1994), [fourth legislature](#) (1994-1999).

In the collection of Press Cuttings (CPPE), you will find a specific section related to “[Agriculture, pêche et alimentation](#)” with a selection of articles regarding this topic.

European Court of Justice

According to the nature of the ECJ, this fonds includes documents dealing with judicial affairs, namely original procedure files or case law. You might find it interesting to consult some of its dossiers dealing with agricultural issues, such as the [143/73 affair](#) dealing with the ‘Fonds d'orientation et de régularisation des marchés agricoles (FORMA)’ and the ‘Fonds d'intervention et de régularisation du marché du sucre (FIRS)’ and the [48/74 affair](#) dealing with the national organization and common organization of agricultural market. The dossier [121/78 affair](#) and the [106/81 affair](#) dealing with Common organization of meat markets: while the first one regulate the beef meat market, the latter refers to sheep and goat meat. These dossiers show how CAP regulated support for livestock farmers (claw-back) and how schemes were harmonized with those at the Community level. The [affaire 54/85](#), instead, deals with the use of pesticides.

European Investment Bank

You might find it interesting some “[Projets](#)” supported by the Bank for rural development (for example the [Projet Bas-Rhône Languedoc](#)); “[Aides, dons et subsides exceptionnels](#)” and “[Publications et artéfacts](#)”, where you can find documents dealing with pre-aid conditions and aids in the agricultural sector, in EU member states and associated countries (here a [Communiqué de presse of 1978](#) as an example).

Economic and Social Committee

The Economic and Social Committee is an advisory body established by the Treaty of Rome, which participates in decision-making procedures by issuing opinions, but without legislative influence on the final decision. Similarly to the fonds of the Council of Ministers, the inventory is organized by years, each including a [sub-section on agriculture](#) (example for the [year 1968](#)).

2) Corporate bodies

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC) and the “Comité de contact des consommateurs de la Communauté européenne” (CCCCE) were created in 1962 thanks to European Commissioner and Vice-President of the EEC Sicco Mansholt. The aim was to have consumer organizations from the member states represented in the Commission’s decision-making process of CAP. BEUC was to act as an umbrella organization for member States’ consumer associations, ensuring representation for its affiliated member countries’ consumer associations. This fonds contains a range of documents (minutes, press documents, official reports...), other a collections of documents relating to the activities of the [Codex Alimentarius Commission \(CAC\)](#) on general principles created by FAO and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to set food standards.

Femmes d'Europe

The FDE collection includes documentation gathered by the Women's Information Service (between 1977 and 1992) for its publications “Femmes d'Europe,” “Suppléments,” and “Cahiers”. While not intuitively related to Agricultural policies, this fonds could give a broader perspective on the impact of the CAP on different segments of rural populations. This fonds has dossiers related to women farmers, who represented a large proportion of working women. In most cases, they carried out their work according to their family situation (as daughters, wives, etc.). As a result, their labor was not directly remunerated, and their professional status was not recognized. The mechanization of agriculture exacerbated their situation, as women farmers had little training and were rarely involved in professional organizations. You can find relevant documents in [Emploi et travail](#), in the sub-sub-section [Agriculture](#).

European Free Trade Organization

The creation of EFTA saw the establishment of a free trade area for industrial goods by some European countries which had not joined the EEC when it was formed in 1957. Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and Portugal were the original Seven who signed the Treaty of Stockholm in 1959, that came into force a year later. Finland became an associate (and later full) member in 1961, and Iceland joined in 1970. The aim of the Stockholm Convention was to reduce tariffs between member states in phases, as in the EEC, a process completed in 1966. You can find relevant documents regarding agricultural matters and negotiations between EFTA's and EEC member states under the sub-fonds EFTA Committee in [“Agricultural Review Committee”](#).

Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC)

In the OEEC's fonds, you can find a specific section on the [OEEC's Directorate for Agriculture and Food](#). With regard to the study of agricultural policies, special importance was given to the dairy sector, cereal and meat sectors, price support systems, structural problems in agriculture and low-income farms.

Pro-European Movement

Ligue européenne de coopération économique

The European League for Economic Cooperation is a non-governmental and apolitical organization. Founded in 1946 under the name Independent League for European Cooperation, it took its current name in 1947. The League was one of the founding organizations of the European Movement in 1948. In its fonds it is possible to find the documents of the [Commission de travaile: Enlargissement pui Voisinage, Agriculture, Transport](#) and its sub-sub-fonds [Agriculture](#).

Political Groups of the European Parliament

The fonds of [EPP Group \(PPE\)](#) include a section for the Standing Working Group on Agriculture. You will find Minutes of the committee's meetings and Plenary notes for 1999 to 2004.

The fonds of [Groupe de l'Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe au Parlement européen](#) includes the documents of the [Commission de l'agriculture et du développement rural \(AGRI\)](#). AGRI is responsible for matters relating to the functioning and development of the common agricultural policy; rural development, including the activities of the relevant financial instruments. Moreover, the dossiers include topics such as veterinary, phytosanitary matters and animal nutrition, animal farming and animal welfare; improving the quality of agricultural products; the supply of agricultural raw materials; the Community Plant Variety Office; forestry and agroforestry. Please note that AGRI was created in March 1958 as the Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and its name changed several times during the various legislative periods.

The [Groupe parlementaire du Parti des socialistes européens fonds](#) include the sub-fonds [Agriculture, Politique régionale et Environnement](#). Please note that only part of the dossiers is now available due to the 30-year accessibility rule.

3. Collections

Conférence des régions de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest (CRENO)

The CRENO collection consists of archival documents, a collection of cartographic works, and a set of geographical maps. In these documents - related to the activities of [István Béla Ferenc Kormoss](#) as cartographer, legal expert, and administrator - is possible to find documents related to the Amsterdam Cultural Foundation's "[Plan Europe 2000, Projet 4: L'avenir de l'agriculture et environnement](#)" and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture (DGVI) "[Travaux cartographiques relatifs aux zones d'agriculture de montagne](#)" that took place in the early 1970s.

4. Private fonds

Graham Avery

Avery held several posts in the DG for Agriculture during his career in the Commission, and you can find in his private fonds various documents related to the development of an [agricultural policy](#) at the European level.

Emile Noel

In his private fonds, you can find documents specifically related to the formulation and reformation of European agricultural policy in the section "[Politique agricole commune](#)" during Noel's time as Secretary-General.

Georges Rencki

In his private fonds, various documents related to the [CAP](#) are available, as he worked in the DG Agriculture and was in charge of relations with professional agricultural organizations.

Michael Tracy

Michael Tracy being also a well-known figure in the field of agricultural policy in the EU, his private fonds includes documents related to [agricultural policy in Europe](#) and European countries.

Helmut von Verschuer

Having held various posts in [DG Agriculture](#) including deputy Director General, his private fonds offer numerous documents related to the CAP and agricultural matters discussed at the EU level.

5. [Oral History](#)

The HEAU is a repository for more than 900 interviews, part of various oral history programs, launched to preserve the voices of European politicians and officials. Below you can find the list of the interviews that mention Agriculture and CAP. Be sure to browse our Oral History database for more information.

[Ahner, Dirk](#)
[Andriessen, Frans](#)
[Bladbjerg, Bjarne](#)
[Cloos, Jim](#)
[Curry, David](#)
[Demarty, Jean-Luc](#)
[Di Carpegna, Ranieri](#)
[Emerson, Michael](#)
[Fischler, Franz](#)
[Franklin, Michael](#)
[Giraudy, Jean-Louis](#)
[Gorlach, Willi](#)
[Guth, Eckart](#)
[Hall, Ronald](#)
[Hannay, David](#)
[Hauge Pedersen, Jens](#)
[Henriksen, Ole Bus](#)
[Jacquot, Michel-Jean](#)
[Jouanjean, Hervé](#)
[Kolte, Lars](#)
[Lacombe, Raymond](#)
[Larsen, Arne](#)
[Lebessis, Notis](#)
[Legras, Guy](#)
[Liikanen, Erkki](#)
[Macsharry, Ray](#)
[Manservisi, Stefano](#)
[Mansholt, Sicco](#)
[Milano, Franco](#)
[Mordrel, Louis](#)
[O'Dwyer, Thomas](#)
[O'Kennedy, Michael](#)
[Pas, Nikolaus Van Der](#)
[Pedersen, Uffe Toudal](#)
[Plumb, Baron Henry](#)
[Pirzio-Biroli, Corrado](#)
[Pooley, Peter](#)
[Pratley, Alan](#)
[Reichert, Martine](#)
[Rencki, Georges](#)
[Trojan, Carlo](#)
[Stendevad, Ejner](#)
[Ventura, Sergio](#)
[Villain, Claude](#)

[von Verschuer, Helmut](#)
[Westhoff, Johannes](#)
[Williamson, Lord David](#)
[Yataganas, Xénophon](#)

4. *Audiovisual Collections*

From our website you can access our Audiovisual collections. [Here](#) an example of the material you can find.