

Committee Members

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The Committee is concerned with agricultural production, processing agricultural products, agricultural market, restructuring and modernisation of agriculture, multifunctional rural development, infrastructure for rural areas, financial problems in agriculture, foreign trade in food and agricultural products, shaping the ownership structure in agriculture, social problems of the rural population, and agricultural organisations and institutions.

Like other Senate committees, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, within its remit, examines the Budget Act and conveys its opinion to the Budget and Public Finance Committee, which is the only committee to present a budget report at a Senate plenary session.

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee is one of 16 standing committees in the 7th Senate (2007-2011).

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee is a successor of two bodies which functioned in the Senate of the Second Polish Republic (1922-1939), the Social Economy Committee and the Agriculture Committee. After the Second World War, the Senate did not resume its activity, as it was abolished by the Communist government following the rigged national referendum in 1946.

In 1989, the National Economy Committee was the first Committee responsible for agricultural issues in the restored Senate. In 1990, the Senate established the standing Agriculture Committee, and in 2005 the Agriculture and Environment Protection Committee. However, in 2008, the Senate returned to the former committee system. The activities undertaken by the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee correspond to the scope of activity of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Committee meetings are often attended by Government officials, as well as representatives of producers, agricultural organisations and trade unions.

The Committee in the First Six Terms

of the Restored Senate

(1989-2007)

The 1990s were the years of Poland's deep political transformation and integration with the European Union. At the time, the Committee studied the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy measures on Polish agriculture. Much attention was focused on the management of pre-accession assistance and, after joining the EU, on the absorption of the UE funding for agriculture and rural development.

The Committee monitored the implementation of the SAPARD programme and the Integrated Control and Management System in Poland, in particular, investigating possible ways of enhancing processing of applications for grants submitted by farmers and of improving procedures with respect to the System of Animal Identification

and Registration. Moreover, the Committee decided to maintain regular surveillance over the distribution of CAP payments.

The Committee also addressed domestic problems, including the activation of rural population, the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, the rural labour market, occupational safety and health standards, veterinary protection of public health, development of secure technologies, reducing production costs, as well as safety, quality, and nutrient content of food products and fodders.

Among other legislative activities, the Committee, in cooperation with other committees, submitted a draft bill amending the State Treasury Agricultural Property Management Act, and a bill amending the Bio-Components Used in Liquid Fuels and Liquid Bio-Fuels Act.

The Committee in the 7th Senate

(2007-2011)

In the current Senate term, the Committee continues its work on reviewing the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy. It has taken action aimed at improving agricultural production, the condition of the food and agricultural industry and commerce.

The Committee is particularly concerned about ownership changes in agricultural and food production sector along with their impact on the raw material supply area.

The ultimate objective is to create a modern, dynamic, and competitive agricultural sector, and to establish conditions conducive to agricultural production, in accordance with best farming principles.

The Committee constantly monitors the implementation of the common organisation of agricultural markets as regards field cultivation; horticultural, meat, and processed products, as well as to the use of genetically modified organisms. On many occasions, the Committee has delivered its views on CAP 2013-2020. Moreover, following the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty, the Committee has been issuing opinions on EU draft legislation concerning agriculture.

Non-legislative Activities

The Committee organises conferences and seminars to address pressing issues facing the State and society. The conferences held in recent years concentrated on the financial assistance to agriculture and rural areas for the years 2007-2013, environmental protection in the EU, future prospects for Poland's dairy industry in the context of CAP reform, and water management in agricultural and rural areas.

In the area of international cooperation, in 2008 the Committee held a meeting of parliamentary committees on agriculture from Visegrad Group countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) plus Bulgaria and Romania, which focused, among others, on the overview of the CAP Health Check. Furthermore, the committee members have participated in international debate on topics such as the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy or future prospects of financial support for fisheries and aquaculture.