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## **SUMMARY**

### **Summary of Report 30/2021, relating to the elections to determine the representativity of farmers' professional organisations in Catalonia in 2021**

*Barcelona, 26 January 2022*

The Public Audit Office for Catalonia has issued Report 30/2021, relating to the elections held in 2021 to determine the representativity of farmers' professional organisations in Catalonia, in accordance with its Annual Programme of Activities.

The report, which was presented by the Chairman, Mr Jaume Amat, was approved by the Audit Office Board at its meeting on 21 December 2021.

The purpose of the audit report is to offer an opinion on the regularity of the election accounts presented by the farmers' professional bodies which achieved representative status in the elections held on 25 and 26 March 2021 and, in the event of detecting any irregularities, to propose the non-awarding or reduction of their electoral grants.

According to the results of the elections, as declared by the Electoral Board and published on the website of the Department for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food (DARPA), UP – Unió de Pagesos (Farmers' Union) and JARC – Joves Agricultors i Ramaders de Catalunya (Young Crop and Livestock Farmers of Catalonia) were to be considered Catalonia's most representative farmers' professional organisations with, respectively, 55.39% and 29.71% of the vote. In third and fourth place were ASAJA – Asociación Agraria Jóvenes Agricultores (Agrarian Association of Young Farmers), with 11.20% of the vote, and Unión de Pequeños Agricultores y Ganaderos (Union of Crop and Livestock Smallholders), with just 2.59% of the vote, below the 3% threshold to be entitled to a grant.

Section 2.5.4 of the report provides tables giving a summary of the main data on electoral expenditure limits, actual expenditures as justified by the different professional bodies, and the grant they should receive.

One conclusion highlighted by the Audit Office is that all the farmers' professional organisations required to do so presented their election accounts to the Public Audit Office before the established deadline. Furthermore, all the organisations complied with the overall maximum limit for electoral expenditures and the advertising limits laid down in the Farmers' Professional Organisations' Representativity Act (LROPA – Act 17/2014, of 23 December).

Bearing in mind the aim, scope and methodology used for this report, the Audit Office proposed that there should no reductions to or non-awarding of the election grants envisaged in electoral legislation.

The findings arising from the audit work carried out were as follows:

- According to Departmental Order ARP/18/2021, the figure for the advance grants awarded to the organisations that had achieved representative status in the previous election could not be more than 50% of the amounts received by those organisations in the previous agricultural elections. On 11 March 2021 the DARPA minister signed a decision to award JARC an advance of €43,000, which was €4,105.49 in excess of 50% of the amount granted to that organisation in the previous elections, thus contravening this statutory requirement.
- The election accounts for JARC were submitted by the organisation's chair and not by its election administrator. This was a breach of the LROPA's stipulations.
- The organisations UP and ASAJA paid for expenditures totalling €7,228.91 and €3,549.36 respectively out of their organisation's general treasury instead of from their election account, as was mandatory.
- The organisations UP and JARC declared election expenses of €3,005.29 and 336.26, respectively, that did not have the status of subsidisable expenditures, because they did not fall within the election expenditure types laid down in the LROPA, they were incurred outside the election period, or they had not been correctly allocated.
- The organisations JARC and ASAJA notified the Electoral Board of the current account they had set up for the elections after the statutory deadline.
- The current account set up by UP for the 2016 elections was kept active for the 2021 elections. This was a breach of the LROPA's stipulations.

Lastly, the Audit Office includes two recommendations regarding statutory regulations, to be considered by the relevant authorities: one refers to the need to precisely define what types of election expenditures can be subsidised; the other relates to the need for regulations to deal with advertising using the new communication channels linked to new information technologies.

This summary is solely for information purposes. The audit report (in Catalan and Spanish) can be consulted at [www.sindicatura.cat](http://www.sindicatura.cat).