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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Drought situation in Portugal and Spain = Information from the Portuguese and Spanish delegations

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Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Portuguese and Spanish delegations on the above subject to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 17-18 July 2017.

**Note from the Portuguese and Spanish delegation on the drought situation in Portugal and Spain 2016/2017**

In mainland Portugal and Spain, the agricultural year has been characterised by very unfavourable weather conditions.

The authorities have been monitoring the situation, noticing that by mid-June the accumulated rainfall during the hydrological year was 74% of its normal value in Portugal and between 50% and 75% in important areas of Spain.

In Portugal the situation of meteorological drought already recorded at the end of May worsened significantly, and on 18 June about 80% of the territory was in severe and extreme meteorological drought. There have been consecutive days with high average temperatures above the usual maximum values for this time of the year, which have led to heat waves (from June 1 to 18, the average value of maximum air temperature in mainland Portugal was 30.7° C, 5.3° C above the normal value), and the percentage of water in the soil in relation to the water that can be used by plants has recorded a sharp decrease.

In Spain the most pronounced rainfall deficit was registered in areas of traditionally high rainfall value reaching levels of 25% of normal rainfall in some areas, and there has been a decrease in the hydrological reserves of consumptive use (supply and irrigation) well below the average of the last 10 years. The combination of low precipitations and high temperatures throughout the spring, followed by some late frosts and hailstorms, have produced severe damages in winter crops –mainly cereals-, vineyards and pastures in many areas across Spanish geography.

The combination of these occurrences has resulted in a deterioration of the state of food crops and of the availability of feed for livestock, with widespread breakdowns in productivity.

Likewise, there has been deterioration in the volume of water stored in river basins, affecting irrigation and resulting in the reduction of area and productivity of spring-summer crops.

As a result of these difficulties, particularly in the cereal and livestock sectors, the financial situation of farmers has been worsening, both by reducing incomes and by increasing production costs (need to anticipate irrigation or to use livestock feed supplementation, considering the scarcity of their own forage resources).

The combination of all these situations means that many farmers are faced with serious financial difficulties, including liquidity problems.

In view of the combination of exceptional circumstances described above, Portugal and Spain consider that measures must be taken to mitigate this situation. Therefore, both member states request for the 2017 claim year:

- a) authorisation to increase at least up to 70% the percentage of advance direct payments listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, in strict compliance with the statutory controls;
  - b) authorisation to apply a derogation in the payment for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment that would enable farmers to use land lying fallow for grazing in the period where this practice is currently prohibited.
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