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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council <i>- Statement of the Ministers of agriculture of Spain and France on future CAP</i>

Delegations will find in the Annex a Statement of the Ministers of agriculture of Spain and France on future CAP.



16th September 2020

Statement of the Ministers of agriculture of Spain and France on future CAP

The Ministers of agriculture from Spain and France want to emphasize the significant work done by the different Presidencies of the EU Council since the proposals for reform of the CAP were presented more than two years ago.

Following the agreement on the European budget reached on July 21st 2020 which consolidates the essential role played by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in supporting the European agricultural and agri-food sector, it is now necessary to finalize the negotiations on the future CAP.

Consequently, the two Ministers wish to convey, through this declaration, their full support and active mobilisation to achieve the objective set by the German Presidency of reaching an agreement during this six-month period.

So, the Ministers of agriculture from Spain and France:

- 1) UNDERLINE** that the health crisis has highlighted the essential role played by the agricultural and agri-food sector in supplying European population. It has also highlighted the need for a strong Common Agricultural Policy whereas the budget was strengthened by the agreement reached on 21st July 2020 by the Heads of State and Government.
- 2) INSIST** on the need to preserve a common framework for the future CAP in order to guarantee a shared ambition for the European agriculture, to preserve the integrity of the single market and to avoid the risks of distortions of competitiveness between the sectors and productions of the member states.
- 3) RECALL** that the specific situation of the outermost regions fully justifies maintaining the POSEI budget.
- 4) STRONGLY SUPPORT** the new environmental architecture including:
 - a. An enhanced conditionality that includes the requirements of greening and a mandatory eco-scheme on the first pillar for all Member states, optional for farmers.
 - b. The establishment at European level of a minimum percentage of the envelope of direct payments reserved for the eco-scheme.
 - c. The accounting of the support for areas facing natural or other specific constraints in the minimum percentage EAFRD of 30% to be dedicated to environmental objectives.

- 5) **RECALL** that the new delivery model for the measures covered by the strategic plan must not lead to the coexistence of two systems: the current system based on conformity rules and the new approach based on performance. In this respect, they raise concerns about some of provisions which could potentially lead to a dual system of verification and control, mixing compliance and performance, since the rules contained in the regulations will still be in force and will have to be controlled by member states.
- 6) **INSIST** that an overly rigid performance framework risks to limit the environmental ambition of members states if they fear for financial penalties or loss of funding in the case they are not able to achieve their planned targets. **SUPPORT** therefore the following proposals:
- a. Simplifying monitoring and evaluation indicators of the policy. In this respect, they unreservedly support the Croatian Presidency proposals for reducing and simplifying the result indicators necessary for performance review. These proposals have received the approval of a large majority of member states in the Council.
 - b. An appropriate implementation in the management of the annual envelopes of the aid interventions to reduce the risk of loss of funds; in this respect, the possibility of mobilizing maximum and average unit amounts should be extended to all interventions of the national strategic plans.
 - c. Considering the difficulties that Member States will have in correctly implementing all the elements of the new CAP, the performance reports should only give rise to financial consequences from the third year of application.
 - d. A simplification of the secondary regulations of the new CAP and especially the interpretative notes that contain overly prescriptive provisions.
 - e. Maintaining the strategic nature of the national plan, which has to remain concise.
- 7) **CALL FOR** the procedure for approving national strategic plans to include shared and transparent stage points between the Commission and the Member states within the Council. They also ask for the mechanism for validating the plans to have a component at political level, since the Ministers of each Member state are responsible for their national plan to their citizens.
- 8) **CONSIDER** that the EAFRD funding from the EU recovery plan should be implemented as quickly as possible to support economic recovery in rural areas, achieve the objectives of the Green Deal and Digitalization within the framework of the transitional regulation; Current rural development programmes are the right tools to achieve these objectives. **CONSIDER** that EAFRD co-financing under the Next Generation funds for the recovery plan should be 100%, as is the case with other European funds in this context.
- 9) **CONSIDER** that the inclusion of gender equality among the specific objectives of the CAP should allow the design of specific interventions in the strategic plans of the Member States to address the particular needs of women in rural areas.
- 10) **REQUEST** to maintain the current regulations that allow the allocation of support to agricultural holdings by considering legal persons or groups as individual farmers, if they contribute to strengthening the economic structures of the legal persons or groups concerned.

11) In the context of a health crisis that underscored the importance of having efficient and responsive regulatory and market management tools, the Spanish and French Ministers of agriculture **ASK** the Council to take up the proposals made by the European Parliament on this subject and **DEFEND** the following proposals:

- a. The extension of the authorizations for wine plantings beyond 2030, to offer a long-term perspective for farmers in their investment choices.
- b. The need to strengthen the European Union's level of self-sufficiency in proteins, in line with the Farm to fork strategy and the European Green Deal. **REQUEST**, in this regard, more flexibility in the eligibility criteria for allocating coupled aid for protein crops and the possibility of making mix between legumes and grasses eligible for this type of aid.
- c. The possibility to implement sectoral programs for "other sectors" in the form of national support programs in order to improve the efficiency and sustainability in farms, in line with the objectives of the Farm to fork strategy.
- d. The inclusion of human factors in the definition of Protected Designations of Origin according to the current wording of the Common Market Organization.
- e. The need to work to ensure the effectiveness of existing measures to protect market stability, and in particular the entry price system applicable to certain fruits and vegetables.



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