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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Council

Subject: Conclusions on the updated EU bioeconomy strategy
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in the Annex a Presidency background paper on the Council conclusions on the updated EU bioeconomy strategy "A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment", which were adopted by the "Competitiveness" Council on 29 November 2019. This paper will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 16-17 December 2019

Council conclusions on the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy

As part of Finland's Presidency commitment to contribute to the streamlining of the bioeconomy, and taking stock of previous debates on this subject held in different Council formations - particularly at several meetings of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" formation, Council conclusions on the updated Bioeconomy Strategy "*A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment*" were adopted on 29 November 2019. The conclusions were prepared by the Research Working Party and adopted in the "Competitiveness" Council (doc. 14594/19). Agricultural attachés participated actively in the preparatory work, both in meetings and through written comments.

The Council welcomed the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy and invited Member States and the Commission to implement it without delay. As already emerged during several debates at Council level, the conclusions emphasised that the bioeconomy offers possibilities for sustainable growth throughout the European Union in urban, rural and coastal areas.

National bioeconomy strategies, together with research and innovation initiatives, are considered as major drivers to implement the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy. As announced in the Strategy itself, the Commission will set up a policy support facility to assist the Member States to prepare their national bioeconomy strategies and assure their smooth implementation.

The Council noted that the operational environment of the bioeconomy is in constant change, including an increased focus on the concepts of circularity and sustainable production systems. It invited the Commission to secure policy coherence between bioeconomy and other policies, especially the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, integrated maritime policy, environment policy, energy and climate policies, health policy, research and innovation policy, industrial policy, trade policy, internal market policies and policies related to circular economy.

In the final paragraph of the conclusions, as a forward-looking message, the Council invited the Commission to "analyse the state of the operational policy, economic and social environment". It also recognised "the need to assess the progress of the updated European Bioeconomy Strategy as one essential enablers for achieving a climate neutral economy and sustainable growth". Finally, in terms of follow-up of the Strategy, the Council called upon the incoming Commission to deliver a progress report and, if appropriate, to accompany it with update of the action plan and/or the Strategy at the latest by 2022.

The Council stressed that a sustainable European bioeconomy should be one of the major components for the implementation of the European Green Deal, which is expected to be amongst the main immediate priorities of the new Commission.

The following key paragraphs in the Council conclusions directly relate to agriculture:

24. [The Council] CONSIDERS that agriculture, as regulated by CAP, is a strategic sector, which has the potential to deploy a sustainable and circular bioeconomy in the different Member States through several instruments, particularly in the field of rural development. HIGHLIGHTS that amongst others the agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI), cooperation and the Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) can be further explored to effectively support the deployment of local bioeconomies in Member States and their territories. STRESSES the need to plan bioeconomy initiatives keeping in mind the specificities of local context; therefore, CONSIDERS that LEADER as a community-led local development strategy could be one of the instruments to this end;

25. *[The Council] ACKNOWLEDGES the huge potential of the bioeconomy for primary producers (including farmers, foresters and fishermen), as it, while relying on circular and sustainable production systems, first and foremost can ensure food security and provide growth and jobs in rural and coastal areas. STRESSES that primary producers need to be better integrated into the new bio-based value chains to enable them to capture a fair share of the created value added through for example cooperation among and with farmers, cooperatives, processors, and other actors in the value chain.*

The Council conclusions can be found on the Council website at the following link:

<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14594-2019-INIT/en/pdf>
