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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Empowering young farmers - a pillar of Europe 2050 (Ettelbrück, Luxembourg, 2 July 2015) - Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency on the above subject, concerning an item under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 14-15 December 2015.

Results of the CEJA conference in July 2015 – Empowering young Farmers: A pillar of Europe 2050

In the framework of the Luxembourg presidency of the EU Council, an International Young Farmers seminar “Empowering young farmers – a pillar of Europe 2050” was organized by the young farmers organisations of Luxembourg in cooperation with the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and the Luxembourg Ministry of Agriculture. The seminar took place from 1-3 July in Ettelbruck (Luxembourg). Representatives from various member organisations of CEJA and Luxembourgish young farmers exchanged their views on agricultural policy across three days.

During the first day, CEJA members discussed and prepared a Young Farmers declaration, CEJA’s ‘Young Farmers Manifesto’ which was launched later in the year at the EXPO in Milan. The Manifesto calls for: the facilitation of access to land and credit through public support measures; regulation to curb unfair trading practices in the food supply chain; income volatility measures for young farmers; the legal protection of all EU standards in TTIP negotiations and increased promotion support for EU producers; and support for access to land in order to safeguard and protect soils and optimise land use by young farmers for food production, among others.

On the 2nd of July, a conference with contributions from different experts from the European Commission, industry and research took place. In the first part, opportunities and risks for agriculture presented by globalization were discussed. The participants agreed that global trade had to be regulated to ensure that all people of the world benefit from globalization. As the world demand for food is rising and European agriculture is producing high quality food, the participants concluded that exports of agricultural goods will provide further growth in the European agricultural sector.

In a second part of the conference, the agricultural policy of 2030 was discussed. Experts presented the main challenges that European agriculture is facing. Increased societal demands on agriculture, especially more demands for environmental protection, animal welfare, climate change mitigation and a high demand for biomass will be the most substantial challenges. Participants then discussed the necessary agricultural political measures to meet these challenges. They agreed that conditions in different EU Member States are very diverse and that a strong second pillar is necessary to reward the environmental and societal services farmers provide across all 28 Member States. In addition, an integrated agriculture and food policy is needed to supply the high demand for biomass. Sustainable biomass systems which include a sustainable intensification of production and a sustainable consumption based on a reduction of waste have to be promoted. In conclusion, all conference participants agreed that targeted measures to facilitate access to land and credit were necessary to build a strong policy for young farmers in the EU and foster an increase in the number of young farmers, which in turn will be essential in order to secure a sustainable and productive future for the sector.

The conference was concluded with the topic of communication. As the gap between societal perception and the reality of agriculture is getting bigger and bigger, communication towards society is an important task for young farmers. In this panel, various young farmers presented innovative communication projects like websites, videos, marketing strategies, etc., in a bid to increase awareness of the importance of farmers and why they require public support.

On 3 July, the young farmers participated in the official opening of the agricultural fair in Ettelbruck and met the European Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan in order to present him with the main conclusions of the three-day seminar.

