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NOTE

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| From: | General Secretariat of the Council |
| To: | Delegations |
| Subject: | AOB item for the meeting of the “Agriculture and Fisheries” Council on 22 September 2025: Decommitment rule for rural development interventions in the CAP Strategic Plans <i>- Information from Latvia, supported by Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain</i> |

In accordance with the EC legislation, the 2014-2022 EAFRD programmes work under the N+3 decommitment rule while the 2023-2027 CAP Plans follow N+2 decommitment rule.

Furthermore, the EAFRD is inherently compatible with the Cohesion Policy Funds and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, where the N+3 decommitment rule continues to apply for the period 2021-2027 (except for year 2027 when the N+2 rule is applied) .

The year 2025 is particularly challenging for farmers and rural entrepreneurs due to the current economic and natural conditions which have a significant impact on the low number of projects submitted under the CAP Strategic Plans thus affecting negatively the acquisition of EAFRD funding in the next 2026.

Taking in the account the constantly changing economic situation, the impact of the Russian war in Ukraine, particularly affecting the EU's Eastern border regions, and natural and climatic conditions, the implementation of CAP Strategic Plan interventions has been delayed, especially investment-related interventions, where beneficiaries are cautious about starting new projects and taking on new multiannual financial commitments in general due to the risks associated with the sector. Rural development projects are often complex, involve a wide range of activities and require a longer period for quality implementation, such as construction works, the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies and the completion of administrative procedures. The N+2 decommitment rule is too restrictive, creating a rush and the risk of non-completion of projects in the current geopolitical context.

There is therefore a concern that there will be serious widespread difficulties to comply with the N+2 decommitment rule by the end of 2025, creating a risk of decommitment already for the first year of implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans. Moreover, if the N+2 rule remains unchanged under the CAP Strategic Plans, the risk could extend to subsequent years.

Above mentioned Member States notice serious risks in the use of allocated funding due to the N+2 decommitment rule, taking into account both the current economic and geopolitical situation, which has significantly affected the activity of support applicants, and the implementation of parallel planning periods.

Therefore, to ensure more efficient acquisition of funds and reduce financial risks, it is necessary to review the decommitment rule, extending it to N+3. This would allow for the full implementation of the interventions provided for in the CAP Strategic Plans.
