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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Threat of drought to the Primary Sector in the Mediterranean Member States (MED9 Agricultural Ministerial Meeting, 1-3 September 2024, Cyprus)
- Information from the Cyprus delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from Cyprus on the above-mentioned subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 23 September 2024.

Threat of drought to the Primary Sector in the Mediterranean Member States

(MED9 Agricultural Ministerial Meeting, 1-3 September 2024, Cyprus)

The Republic of Cyprus, acting as Chair of the MED9 Group for 2024, hosted the Agricultural Ministerial Meeting of the nine Mediterranean EU Member States, on 1-3 September 2024. Commissioner Wojciechowski also participated to this Meeting which aimed to enhance cooperation between the MED9 in addressing common challenges related to water scarcity in agriculture and possible steps forward for ensuring a sustainable, prosperous and resilient agricultural sector.

The Ministerial working session focused on the "Threat of Drought to the Primary Sector in Mediterranean Member States". The MED9 Members States endorsed the attached Joint Declaration reaffirming their commitment to address this pressing common threat.

Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the MED9

Threat of Drought to the Primary Sector in Mediterranean Member States

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of Cyprus, France, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain and representatives from Croatia and Greece, convened in Cyprus on the 3rd of September 2024, representing the countries of the MED9 initiative, reaffirm our commitment to addressing key challenges in the Mediterranean region related to the pressing issue of water scarcity;

Acknowledging the significance of the Strategic Agenda approved by the European Council on the 27th of June 2024 and the importance of strengthening water resilience across the Union to support sustainable agricultural practices;

Recognizing that the Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029 presented on the 18th of July 2024 by President Von der Leyen, highlight the need to strengthen Europe's water security and for a new European Water Resilience Strategy,

Considering studies and reports, highlighting the increasing risks from accelerated drought and climate change to, among others, agriculture production, food security, rural economic stability, the social fabric of rural areas and the biodiversity;

We pledge:

to implement sustainable water management practices in agriculture and adopt advanced irrigation techniques and water saving agricultural practices and technologies, including drought resistant crops and varieties;

to strengthen cooperation amongst the MED 9 countries, enhancing information sharing, engaging in joint research programs, exchanging experiences on best management practices and innovative technological solutions to mitigate the consequences of drought;

to strengthen partnerships with the Mediterranean countries in the EU's Southern Neighborhood, whose agricultural sector is also confronted with drought and water scarcity;



to support innovation and digitalization in agrifood production, with the aim of promoting the efficient use of water as a tool for adapting our agriculture to climate change;

We commit to support public awareness campaigns and promote the cultivation of a water saving culture to our farmers;

We call:

for an integrated approach to ensure synergy and coherence across all legislative processes, in order to secure water availability and address water scarcity, ensuring the necessary water storage, given the critical importance of water for the primary sector;

for flexibility and simplification in the financial framework of CAP for water management measures, including the financing eligibility of interventions in irrigation investments, and provide with water scarcity and drought impact adaptation and mitigation tools including under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP);

for promoting applied research in the EU to contribute to sustainable water management, advancing the use of available technologies and plant breeding techniques to obtain plant varieties better adapted to water scarcity;

We invite the European Commission to swiftly proceed with the European Water Resilience Strategy taking into account agricultural and local specificities, such as the long-term unavailability of water resources and future climate projections; as well as issues related to sustainability of the whole agri-food chain, security of food supply, farmers' income and consumers' expectations;

We advocate for the development of a comprehensive approach, in line with the Strategic Agenda approved by the European Council on 27 June 2024;

This Ministerial meeting demonstrates our determination to address water scarcity and secure a resilient and prosperous future for our farmers.

3rd of September 2024,

Cyprus

