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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 28-29 September 2026: Impact of the historic drought on agricultural production, feed availability and animal welfare in Slovakia – need for a timely European response - Information from Slovakia

Slovakia is once again raising the issue of the extremely serious consequences of the historic drought that affected Slovak agriculture in 2026. The historic drought is no longer merely a threat for the future. It is a reality that is currently reducing agricultural production, threatening livestock farms and weakening farmers’ ability to continue production.

The statistics are alarming. Drought of varying intensity affected up to 90% of Slovakia’s territory. According to data from the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC), Slovakia is among the Member States most affected by the combination of extreme temperatures and a critical lack of water.

The impacts on agricultural production are significant. The wheat harvest fell by 15%, barley by almost 20%, and grain maize production is expected to decline by up to 40% year on year. Hay and roughage production decreased by almost half in some areas. Significant losses were also recorded for oilseeds, sugar beet, fruit, vegetables and vineyards.

Behind these figures are not only hectares and tonnes. Behind them are individual farmers, their families and farms built over generations. The drought is taking away not only their harvests and income. It is also taking away the feed needed to maintain livestock farming. According to a survey by the Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber, farmers have already sold or plan to sell approximately 10,000 farm animals. Half of them are dairy cows. Slovakia could thus lose one in every twenty dairy cows in the coming months as a result of the drought.

However, even this may not be the final figure. Farmers may feel the full impact of feed shortages only after the autumn maize harvest. Once a herd is liquidated due to a lack of feed, rebuilding it takes years. Such a development would weaken the production potential of Slovak agriculture in the long term and would be in direct conflict with the objective of the EU and Slovakia to preserve and develop livestock production.

The situation is also being aggravated by the lack of water. Drying wells are forcing farmers to transport water by tanker, which significantly increases their costs and puts pressure on animal health and welfare. In some regions, water scarcity is also becoming an issue for supplying the population.

However, Slovakia has certainly not remained inactive. The Government approved EUR 30 million to compensate for production losses caused by the drought and a further EUR 5 million for livestock farmers. We are responding to the increase in fertiliser and energy prices by releasing a further amount of more than EUR 13 million from the state budget. At the same time, on 16 September, we began paying advances on direct payments in an estimated amount of approximately EUR 200 million.

The fight against drought and water scarcity has also become a personal priority of the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic. Under his leadership, the National Commission for Water and Drought was established to ensure a coordinated approach by the individual ministries. It will also address the provision of new drinking water sources, including the assessment of a possible water reservoir project for eastern Slovakia. Slovakia is thus taking immediate measures while also preparing solutions for the decades ahead.

At national level, Slovakia acted quickly and used all available possibilities. However, national budgets alone cannot resolve a crisis of this scale. Moreover, Member States do not have the same financial means. Assistance to farmers affected by a comparable crisis therefore cannot depend on the Member State in which they farm.

If drought has affected a large part of Europe and is threatening harvests, feed availability and the maintenance of livestock farming in several Member States, it cannot be expected that Member States will address all its consequences individually. **A common and sufficiently strong European response is needed.**

In view of the increasing frequency and intensity of drought and other climatic events that negatively affect agricultural production in the Member States, Slovakia therefore calls on the European Commission to propose a substantial increase in the financial resources of the agricultural reserve. A sufficiently funded agricultural reserve is essential to ensure timely and targeted support for farmers affected by drought, extreme temperatures and other climate-related crises.

At the same time, the European Commission should provide the maximum possible flexibility in the use of existing CAP instruments and State aid schemes so that support reaches the most affected farmers quickly, in a targeted manner and without unnecessary administrative obstacles.

Farmers cannot be expected to absorb increasingly severe climate shocks without adequate instruments to manage their consequences. If the European Union is to protect its agricultural production and food security, it must be capable of providing an effective response when a crisis exceeds the capacity of farmers and individual Member States to address it.

At the same time, Slovakia fully supports strengthening the long-term resilience of European agriculture. The current situation confirms that this must be one of the main priorities of the future CAP, supported by sufficient resources for the restoration and modernisation of irrigation systems, water retention in the landscape, soil protection and effective climate risk management instruments.

However, long-term adaptation cannot be the only response to a crisis that farmers are already facing today. If Slovakia is at risk of losing one in every twenty dairy cows in the coming months as a result of a single drought, we cannot wait for long-term measures to deliver results.

Slovak and European farmers need timely and concrete European assistance so that they can secure feed for their animals, maintain livestock farming, preserve liquidity and continue producing food.