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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Post 2027 Common Agricultural Policy: Food security and targeting of support

The annex to this note contains the Presidency's background note and guiding questions for the Council meeting on 17 November.

The Common Agricultural Policy after 2027 – Food security and targeting of support

At the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 17 November 2025, the Presidency is planning a thematic discussion concerning the Common Agricultural Policy after 2027. The discussion will focus on food security and how targeting of income support under the Common Agricultural Policy may contribute to this objective. In addition, the discussion will also cover food security preparedness and reserves.

As a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and other geopolitical and trade-related tensions, food security is back at the center of discussions on agriculture in the EU. As a major net exporter of agri-food products, the EU is not only strongly placed in terms of its own food security; it also contributes significantly to global food security. At the same time, geopolitical barriers to trade have shown vulnerabilities related to certain products, such as fertilizers, energy and feedstuffs. Climate change is also a growing challenge to food security in the EU.

In its proposal for a regulation for the Common Agricultural Policy after 2027 (doc. 11733/25), the Commission proposes that Member States must ensure that income support is primarily directed towards farmers with agriculture as their main activity and who therefore actively contribute to food security. To that end, and in particular to maintain the capacity to produce food in all parts of the EU, support would be targeted to different groups and geographical areas, which would need more income support to remain viable.

According to the Commission, while family farms who receive between EUR 20,000 and 50,000 in area-based income support have an annual income of around EUR 50,000, farms who receive between EUR 75,000 and 100,000 in area-based income support have an annual income of around EUR 150,000. In light of this, the Commission has proposed reductions in, as well as a total cap on, the amount of area-based income support a farmer can receive per year.

According to data from Eurostat¹, in 2020 the largest 19 percent of farms in the EU were responsible for more than 90 percent of the EU's total agricultural economic output. The data suggests that on average the farms with the largest economic size within the EU contribute significantly to food security. Given that the farm structure differs significantly between the Member States, ensuring a level-playing field in the Single Market with robust common rules on the amounts of support is essential.

The proposal on the Common Market Organization for Agricultural Products after 2027 (doc. 11722/25) also includes an enhanced emphasis on food security, in particular through the measures on national food security preparedness and response plans and the possibility of establishing reserves of agricultural products. On 22 October 2025, the Commission published a report under the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism (EFSCM) on the use of new information and communication technologies to ensure better market transparency, in particular in times of crisis.

Below follows a description of the relevant elements in the two proposals referred to above, and two questions are proposed to guide the Ministers' interventions. Elements in the proposals that are bracketed, since they will most likely form part of a horizontal negotiation on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028-34, will be negotiated in the European Council.

Targeting of area-based income support to specific groups or based on specific criteria

Member States would have to do an analysis of how income support should be differentiated by groups of farmers or geographical areas, on the basis of objective and non-discriminatory criteria, based on farmers' income from agricultural activity to ensure that the support is targeted at farmers who are the most in need. These include, but are not limited to, young and new farmers, women, family or small farmers, farmers combining the production of crops and livestock, or farmers in areas with natural or other area-specific constraints. However, if the analysis of income needs shows that other forms of targeting are not needed, it is only mandatory for the Member States to provide a higher support per hectare for young farmers.

¹ Eurostat (ef_m_farmleg), farm indicators by legal status of the holding, utilised agricultural area, type and economic size of the farm and NUTS 2 region

In its Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture of 21 October 2025 (doc. 14410/25), the Commission recommended that Member States dedicate at least six percent of their agriculture ring-fenced amounts to generational renewal.

The Commission proposes an upper and a lower limit within which the planned average aid per hectare for degressive area-based income support in each Member State would have to stay. According to the Commission, and compared to current practices, this would create a convergence towards a more common support level between the Member States.

Degressivity and capping of area-based income support

The area-based income support would be degressive and capping would be introduced on how much area-based income support a farmer can receive per year. The support would be 100 percent EU-financed.

Definition of farmer for area-based income support

The Member States would have to ensure that area-based income support is primarily directed towards farmers who exercise an agricultural activity and actively contribute to food security, while ensuring that the support is compliant with WTO rules. Small farmers, whose principal activity is not agriculture, but who are engaged in at least a minimum level of agricultural activity, would be considered farmers as well if Member States so decide.

Member States would have to ensure that at the latest by 2032 the applicants who reach the retirement age, determined by national law, and who receive a retirement pension, no longer receive degressive area-based income support. However, they may still receive support for small farmers, as well as other CAP payments.

Payment for small farmers

Under the Commission's proposal, Member States would have to offer a simplified form of income support to small farmers in the form of lump sum support of up to EUR 3,000 per year. Also for small farmers, the Member States would have to ensure that the support is primarily directed towards farmers who exercise an agricultural activity on their holding and actively contribute to food security. In addition, Member States may differentiate the support for different groups of small farmers or geographical areas. Member States could also set criteria to exclude very small farms.

Payment for natural and other area-specific constraints

Member States would have to provide support to compensate farmers for natural or other area-specific constraints. Member States would also be able to add new areas with specific constraints in the National and Regional Partnership Plans, but these newly designated areas cannot make up more than 2 percent of their utilised agricultural area.

Coupled income support

Member States shall provide coupled income support to farmers in specific agricultural sectors and products, or to specific types of farming, which undergo difficulties and are important for socio-economic or environmental reasons. The coupled support would have to address additional income needs based on objective and non-discriminatory criteria. The impact on the internal market would have to be minimised.

As today, support granted as a payment per animal would be limited to beef and veal, milk and milk products, sheep and goat meat, honey and silkworms. In livestock sectors, Member States would have to take into account environmental impacts, including by setting maximum livestock density criteria in nitrate vulnerable zones. Support granted as a payment per hectare may include support for energy crops and grasses.

Member States could allocate to coupled income support up to 20 percent of the amount of EU funds that they allocate to degressive area-based income support, agri-environment and climate actions, small farmers and crop-specific payment for cotton. An additional 5 percentage points of coupled income support could be added if it goes to protein crops, farmers combining the production of crops and livestock, or agricultural areas at risk of abandonment, in particular in regions bordering Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

National food security preparedness and reserves

Under the proposal on the Common Market Organisation after 2027, Member States would have to prepare national food security preparedness and response plans, taking into account their specific risk profiles. The objective would be to maintain the availability, access and security of supply of agricultural products and to prevent or mitigate supply chain disruptions during emergencies or severe crises at all territorial levels. Member States would have to designate a national competent authority or contact point responsible for food security preparedness and response coordination with other Member States and the Commission.

Member States could establish reserves of agricultural products held by public or private operators for military or civil protection use in emergencies or crises. Member States would have to ensure that market distortions are minimised. Purchases of agricultural products for the reserves would be made at market prices, through tendering procedures. The release of agricultural products from reserves onto the market would have to be carried out in a transparent manner, at market prices.

The Commission would have the possibility to adopt implementing acts laying down rules for coordinated actions for the establishment and management of the reserves, as well as for actions to mitigate cross-border supply risks and ensure continuity of supply during disruptions. It may also adopt rules for the implementation of voluntary solidarity and mutual assistance mechanisms by which Member States make parts of their reserves available to another Member State facing severe shortages.

In light of the above, the Presidency proposes the following questions:

- 1. In your view, to what extent does the proposed targeting of area-based income support, as well as other types of income support, in the Common Agricultural Policy after 2027 achieve the objective of strengthening food security?*
- 2. What are the main food security risks that reserves of agricultural products could help address while maintaining the market orientation of the Common Agricultural Policy?*