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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Establishment of new and lower maximum levels for PFAS in foodstuffs
- Information from the Danish delegation on behalf of the Czech, Danish, German and Netherlands delegations.

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Danish delegation on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council meeting "Agriculture and Fisheries" on 25 April 2023.

Establishment of new and lower maximum levels for PFAS in foodstuffs**Information from the Danish delegation on behalf of Germany, the Netherlands and Czech Republic.**

Poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are man-made chemicals that, due to their multiple uses in industrial and consumer applications, are found widely in the environment, animals and humans. This, together with the increasing knowledge about the risks that these substances pose to human health and the environment and the border-crossing nature of PFAS, calls for collective action at EU level.

Human exposure to PFAS is mainly through food and drinking water. Following risk assessments carried out by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and measured levels in food from the EU Member States, the European Commission introduced maximum levels for PFAS in certain foodstuffs of animal origin (eggs, meat, fish, fishery product and mussels) from 1 January 2023.

We believe it is necessary to routinely revisit the existing maximum levels with the aim of reducing them as much as possible whenever new occurrence data becomes available. Furthermore, it is essential to establish new maximum levels for PFAS in additional foodstuffs. To achieve this, food monitoring data should be submitted to EFSA from all Member States as requested by Commission Recommendation (EU) 2022/1431. Also, this recommendation encourages Member States to find the sources of PFAS in food. We know that feed is a relevant source of PFAS in food.

To reduce human, animal and environmental exposure to PFAS and thereby address the associated environmental and health risks, we find it essential to target the sources of these substances. In January 2023, the responsible authorities of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway submitted a joint proposal for a restriction in the EU chemicals legislation (REACH) on a large variety of different uses of more than 10,000 PFAS to the European Chemicals Agency. This is a very important proposal to reduce future exposure to the environment, which in turn would also reduce the contamination of food and feed.

In addition to restricting the manufacturing, placing on the market and use of PFAS under REACH, low maximum levels for PFAS in foodstuffs are an effective tool to reduce human exposure. Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Czech Republic call on the European Commission to be as ambitious as possible in lowering the existing and setting new maximum levels for PFAS in foodstuffs based on occurrence data in food.
