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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Conclusions on the opportunities of the bioeconomy in the light of current challenges: follow-up
- Information from the Commission
- Exchange of views

With a view to the meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture in Genk on 8 April 2004, the annex to this note contains background information from the Presidency and a question to frame the exchange of views.

Follow-up to the “Conclusions on the opportunities of the bioeconomy in the light of current challenges with special emphasis on rural areas”

The **EU Bioeconomy Strategy** was first launched by the Commission in 2012. This strategy mainly addressed the production of biological resources and their conversion into vital products and bioenergy. In 2018, the EU Bioeconomy Strategy was updated with a focus on the development of a sustainable EU bioeconomy. The Council approved conclusions¹ on this updated Strategy in 2019. Finally, following a request from the Council, the Commission published a **progress report on the implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy in 2022**. Many areas of improvements were identified such as better land management and biomass demand and more sustainable consumption patterns.

On 25 April 2023, the Council approved **conclusions on the opportunities of the bioeconomy**². The conclusions underline the importance of the bioeconomy in meeting current challenges and the opportunities it offers to add value from bio-based products and biomass and boost the rural economy, providing new sources of income for producers and making Europe more resilient. Bioeconomy is also an important tool for achieving the objectives of the Green Deal.

The text « INVITES the Commission to present before the next strategic period, subsequent to an in-depth assessment of actions at the EU level, **an updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan** on the basis of those Council conclusions, taking into account the Progress Report on the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and the changes in Europe and in the surrounding world ». The text also stipulates the following: « [The Council of the European Union] INVITES the Commission in the meantime to report to the Council annually on its related actions ». That is why the Presidency **invites the European Commission to present its latest progress and related actions on the bioeconomy** at the SCA meeting on 8 April 2024.

¹ doc. 14594/19 - The updated Bioeconomy Strategy "A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment"

² doc. 8406/23

While awaiting an updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan and in the light of the current farmers' protests and the importance of strengthening the EU agricultural sector's competitiveness on international markets, the Presidency suggests the following question for an exchange of views at the meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture on 8 April 2024:

- *Following the adoption of the Council conclusion on bioeconomy in April 2023 there have been a growing number of bioeconomy initiatives in the EU. Based on the experience gained so far, to which areas should more attention be given in order for EU policy to enable the upscaling of production in an economically profitable way within the boundaries of our planet and its ecosystems?*
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