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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Special Committee on Agriculture
Subject:	CAP Strategic Plans: implications for and implementation by Member States <i>-Information from the Commission</i> <i>-Exchange of views</i>

I. INTRODUCTION

On 29 November 2017, the Commission adopted its Communication on "The Future of Food and Farming". On 29 January 2018, the Council held a thematic debate focusing, among others, on the enhanced subsidiarity, new delivery model and CAP Strategic Plans as the key new tool for CAP programming and implementation. During the subsequent Council meeting on 19 February as well as during the meetings of the Special Committee on Agriculture on 5 and 12 February, Member States discussed specific implications of the new delivery model and the CAP Strategic Plans for different policy instruments such as direct payments, market measures, environment and climate actions, as well as rural development.

II. CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

The Communication suggests that Member States define their policy choices in a structured process that would lead to the elaboration of a CAP Strategic Plan, covering interventions under both pillars and ensuring policy coherence within the future CAP and with other EU policies. The planning process should be shaped in a much simpler way than the current rural development programming. The Commission would assess and approve such plans with a view to maximizing the contribution of the CAP towards the EU priorities and objectives.

The Presidency Conclusions adopted on 19 March call for simple CAP Strategic Plans, allowing flexibility in their design and subsequent amendments, taking into account the division of competences within each Member State and lessons learned from current rural development programming and implementation. Furthermore, the future CAP Strategic Plans should avoid overlapping with other programming documents. Member States invite the Commission to set up appropriate and functional mechanisms and procedures to ensure the timely approval of the future CAP Strategic Plans, and to avoid delays and disruption in the disbursement of payments to farmers. Member States called on the Commission to support them, in a partnership-based approach, in the process of designing and adapting CAP Strategic Plans and in their implementation. They also stressed the need for a sufficiently long transitional period for Member States to adapt to the new CAP delivery model. In this regard, they asked for the necessary assistance to be made available.

III. CAP STRATEGIC PLAN DESIGN - POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES' AUTHORITIES

As a new element in the future CAP delivery architecture, the CAP Strategic Plan design is expected to present a challenge for the Member States' administration. Clarity on its structure, its content, the necessary consultation and programming mechanism and its subsequent approval process are crucial for the Member States' preparation to successfully implement the CAP after 2020.

Possible challenges and implications for MS generating from the proposed new tool include the division of competences within the Member States and the creation of the appropriate governance and monitoring structures, the time, competences and resources needed to design the plan, collecting the necessary data and conducting analyses, planning the types of interventions and the indicators for performance monitoring meeting both the objectives set at EU and national level.

The programming process is inevitably linked to time constrains, as is the approval process. A suitable but strict timeframe would be a guarantee not to cause delays and disruption in the disbursement of payments to farmers. In his speech at the Inter-parliamentary committee meeting between the European Parliament and the National Parliaments on “Towards the CAP after 2020: the Future of Food and Farming” on 24 April, Commissioner Hogan mentioned the possibility of granting partial approval for a single CAP pillar in order to avoid delays in payments.

Questions for the SCA:

Against this background, delegations are invited to:

- express their views on possible implications and challenges stemming from the proposed CAP Strategic Plan's design, programming and approval process on their national competences and governance, required human and technical resources and timeframe; and
- share ideas on how those issues could be addressed.