

Brussels, 20 May 2026
(OR. en)

9310/26

AGRI 376
AGRILEG 122
AGRIFIN 95
AGRISTR 31
AGRIORG 71

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB item for the meeting of the “Agriculture and Fisheries” Council
on 26 May 2026:
Meeting of Common Agricultural Policy Directors
(Cyprus, 28-30 April 2026)
- Information from the Presidency

The Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union organised the Meeting of CAP Directors in Paphos, Cyprus, from 28 to 30 April 2026. Representatives from all Member States, together with representatives of the European Commission, participated in the meeting. The discussions focused on the implementation of the current CAP Strategic Plans, the future Common Agricultural Policy after 2027, financing agriculture in the 2030s, and support for the transition towards more sustainable and resilient farming systems. Three thematic workshops were organised on these topics.

The meeting was opened by the Permanent Secretary of the Directorate General of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of Cyprus, Mr Andreas Gregoriou. He underlined the importance of cooperation and the exchange of experiences among Member States at a key moment in the discussions on the future of the CAP. The Cyprus Presidency highlighted that the exchange took place while the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans 2023–2027 is progressing and preparations are gradually beginning for the post-2027 policy framework.

During the official programme, the Cyprus Presidency presented the role of the CAP in Cyprus and shared the experience gained from the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan. The presentation highlighted the importance of the CAP for the agricultural sector in Cyprus, particularly in strengthening competitiveness, rural development, environmental sustainability and resilience.

The European Commission, represented by the Director-General of DG AGRI, Ms Elisabeth Werner, delivered a presentation entitled “Present and Future CAP: Lessons Learned from the Strategic Plans and Post-2027 Policy Perspectives”. The presentation provided an overview of the implementation of the current CAP Strategic Plans, highlighting strong overall delivery across several policy objectives, while also identifying challenges related to investments, risk management tools, control systems and administrative implementation. Attention was given to achievements in income support, environmental and climate action, generational renewal, innovation and digitalisation, as well as to lessons learned for the future CAP framework after 2027. The presentation also underlined the importance of maintaining a strategic and performance-based approach while ensuring greater simplification, flexibility and balanced governance arrangements for Member States. Discussions addressed the future orientation of the CAP around the objectives of attractiveness, competitiveness and resilience, fairness and sustainability, including the possible development of National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRP Plans) and the need for stronger coordination, trust and cooperation in the implementation of future policy objectives.

The European Investment Bank Group, represented by Ms Aimilia Pistrika, Head of the EIB Group Office in Cyprus, delivered a presentation on EIB Group support for agriculture and generational renewal in the European Union. The presentation highlighted the growing role of financial instruments, blended finance and advisory support in strengthening competitiveness, sustainability and resilience across the agri-food and bioeconomy sectors. Attention was given to support for young and new farmers, climate adaptation and water resilience investments, innovation and access to finance through guarantees, venture debt and cooperation with financial intermediaries. The presentation also underlined the importance of combining public and private financing in order to mobilise investments and facilitate the green transition in agriculture.

The plenary discussions were complemented by three parallel thematic workshops.

Workshop 1: CAP implementation and governance under the NRP Plans

This workshop focused on governance arrangements and implementation aspects related to the future National and Regional Partnership Plans. Discussions addressed the need for clear governance structures, effective coordination mechanisms, and sufficient administrative capacity in order to support the implementation of future CAP arrangements. Participants also discussed the importance of simplification and synergies between policy areas.

The main conclusions from the workshop included:

- Clear governance structures and clarity of responsibilities will be essential under the future NRP Plans.
- Strong coordination mechanisms across policy areas will be necessary to ensure coherent implementation.
- Administrative capacity and implementation risks remain key challenges for Member States.
- Simplification should be mainstreamed as a core principle from the design phase of the NRP Plans.
- The future framework offers opportunities to enhance synergies across interventions and policy objectives.

Workshop 2: Financing agriculture in the 2030s

This workshop explored the future financing needs of the agricultural sector and the role of financial instruments under the future CAP framework. The European Commission presented experiences regarding access to finance and the impact of EAFRD financial instruments under Rural Development Programmes, including examples from Poland. Ireland and Greece shared national experiences regarding the use of financial instruments and the combination of grants with financing schemes.

Participants discussed the future role of financial instruments, the involvement of commercial banks and advisory services, and the need to simplify procedures in order to improve access to finance for farmers.

The main conclusions from the workshop included:

- Financial instruments play an increasingly important role in supporting investments and business creation in agriculture and their attractiveness becomes bigger, particularly when combined with grant schemes.
- Different banking products are at disposal to respond to the diverse financing needs of the agricultural sector.
- Technical assistance, advisory support and specialised banking expertise are important for facilitating access to finance and evaluating agricultural investments.
- Simplification of administrative procedures and the future regulatory framework would support wider uptake of financial instruments.
- Participants highlighted the usefulness of the FI Compass platform as a knowledge-sharing tool.
- Several participants noted that financial instruments cannot fully replace grant schemes, particularly for investments related to adaptation and sustainability objectives.
- Questions were also raised regarding the interaction with State aid rules and the possible need for additional flexibility or derogations.

Workshop 3: Future CAP – Support to transition towards sustainable and resilient farming systems

This workshop focused on the design of future CAP support aimed at facilitating the transition towards more sustainable and resilient farming systems. Discussions covered targeting mechanisms, the design of transition plans, the role of advisory services and the setting of support levels for beneficiaries. The European Commission presented the key elements of the proposed framework, including its objectives and main elements, possibilities for targeting specific farming systems or types of farms, the design and content of transition plans, and methods for setting the support. Nederland shared with the Working Party participants its initial reflections and key considerations, welcoming elements such as the recognition of the need for transition in agriculture, especially for support the uptake and maintenance of organic farming, and implementation flexibility. A number of points for further reflection were raised, in particular regarding potential complexity of the measure, implications for the CAP budget, as well as how innovation could be better incorporated and links with existing national policies and initiatives.

Participants discussed different approaches for targeting support, including the use of existing national schemes, certification systems and territorial approaches, while emphasising the need for flexibility and stakeholder involvement.

The main conclusions from the workshop included:

- Support could be targeted on the basis of farming systems, farm types, territories or specific objectives such as climate adaptation, water efficiency or soil health, while a great amount of flexibility is inherent for member states.
- Broad stakeholder involvement and bottom-up approaches would be important elements in the preparation of future transition schemes to ensure sufficient engagement from farmers.
- Transition support should lead to a real transformation at farm level while remaining sufficiently flexible and practical for farmers.
- There is a need to balance simplification with safeguards related to selection, monitoring and controls.

- Milestones and controls should remain simple and manageable in order to avoid excessive administrative and financial risks for farmers.
- Accredited advisors could play an important role in defining milestones, support amounts and transition plans.
- Participants highlighted the importance of mitigating financial risks linked to incomplete transitions, including through instalment-based payments.
- The need to avoid double funding and to clarify the compatibility of transition support with other CAP instruments was also discussed.

On the final day of the programme, participants took part in a thematic field visit to agricultural holdings in Cyprus, including a citrus plantation and a modern aeroponic greenhouse unit. The visits showcased practical examples of innovation, sustainability, water efficiency and climate adaptation in Mediterranean agriculture.

At the end of the meeting, the Irish delegation as the upcoming Presidency of the Council informed participants about the next CAP Directors Meeting that will take place in Dublin between 14 and 16th of September 2026.