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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Interparliamentary conference "The role of Parliaments in shaping the future of food and farming" (Zagreb, 22-23 November 2018)
- Information from the Croatian delegation

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) information received from the Croatian delegation on the abovementioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 17-18 December 2018.

Interparliamentary conference "The role of Parliaments in shaping the future of food and farming"

(Zagreb, 22-23 November 2018)

On 22/23 November 2018 the Interparliamentary Conference “The Role of Parliaments in Shaping the Future of Food and Farming” was held in Zagreb. The Conference was organised jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia and the Agricultural Committee of the Croatian Parliament.

The objective of the Conference was to encourage a more active participation of the national parliaments of the EU Member States into the discussion on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Participants included representatives of national parliaments of the large majority of the EU Member States, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Croatia and sectorial associations. The Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Phil Hogan presented the proposed CAP legislative framework for the next programming period and replied to many questions of the participants.

During the first day of the Conference the discussions were divided into four separate sessions, each focused on one of the key aspects of the new proposal:

1. The process of adoption of CAP national strategic plans
2. Generational renewal
3. Local government and rural development
4. Research in agriculture, food safety and food quality.

The summary of the discussions was presented at the plenary session on the second day, followed by additional presentations of parliamentarians and representatives of sectorial associations on various other topics related to the future CAP.

No formal conclusions were envisaged or adopted during the Conference, but the discussions resulted with numerous recommendations:

- the level of financing of the CAP should remain at least at the current level, given the importance of the agricultural community in ensuring food security, sustainability of rural areas and its contribution to the environment;
- structural measures contribute to increasing the competitiveness of agriculture, therefore reducing the budget for rural development should be avoided;
- the priority of the CAP reform should be a genuine simplification, leading to a policy which will be more comprehensible to farmers and easier to implement;
- increased flexibility for Member States is welcomed but renationalisation of the CAP should be avoided;
- programming of CAP measures should be focused on meeting the needs of small and medium-sized farms;
- coupled payments and payments for areas with natural constraints should be retained;
- new elements of conditionality with respect to climate and environment should be voluntary for the Member States and sufficient funds should be provided to reduce their impact on the competitiveness;
- in order to keep the young people in rural areas the definition of a "young farmer" needs to be adjusted and an appropriate level of funding to young farmers should be ensured within the agricultural budget and other EU funds;
- the early retirement schemes for farm holders should be considered as a possible solution to stimulate the transfer of farms between generations;

- in relation to the role of regional and local authorities in implementing the rural development policy and the LEADER initiative in particular, the participants highlighted the complexity of the current administrative requirements, concluding that they need to be simplified in the next programming period;
- the model of public-private partnership should be encouraged so as to provide additional financing sources at regional and local level;
- in relation to research and innovation in the agricultural sector the uneven participation of the Member states in EU research programmes was emphasized as problematic and participants concluded that the conditions for fairer geo-balance should be ensured.

Co-legislators at the EU level, as well as the national administrations, were called upon to invest the necessary efforts in order to avoid delays in the adoption of the legal framework for the future CAP and consequently for individual national strategic plans. Otherwise, delays in payments to farmers might occur after 2020.

The participants welcomed the Conference and a continuation of discussions on CAP related issues by national parliaments is envisaged by a Declaration on Cooperation concluded between the Croatian and Romanian Parliaments.