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NOTE

From: General Secretariat
To: Delegations

No. Cion prop.: 15396/1/11 REV 1 - COM(2011) 625 final/2

Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the
framework of the common agricultural policy (*CAP Reform*)
- Presidency questionnaire

With a view to structure the debate in Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") at its session on
26-27 April 2012, delegations will find in Annex the questionnaire drawn up by the Presidency.

Presidency questionnaire for April Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries")
CAP reform: direct payments

Table round I:

Under the first pillar the Commission proposes a number of special measures to help particular categories of farmers. On *voluntary coupled support* the Presidency has noted that the proposal by the Commission seems to strike a balance.

However with regard to:

- the schemes for *young farmers* and for *small farmers* some concerns have been raised. Delegations are therefore invited to assess the proposed content and the mandatory nature of the schemes.
- the scheme for *farmers in areas with natural constraints*. How do delegations assess this option particularly in relation to Pillar II-related measures?

Table round II:

There is broad consensus in Council that direct payments should be properly targeted and that the targeting mechanisms should be workable, should avoid a disproportionate administrative burden and should take account of different circumstances in the Member States. On *active farmer* the Presidency has noted considerable support for its suggestion to focus on farming and, in order to avoid undue administrative burden, not to require Member States to control the proportion of direct payments received by recipients compared to their receipts from non agricultural activities and to allow Member States a greater margin of discretion.

However, on *capping* the Presidency has noted the calls made by several delegations for a simpler approach in the calculation on capping¹.

- Delegations are therefore invited to indicate how improvements could be made to ensure a more simple model from the outset.

On *internal redistribution* the Commission proposes that Member States achieve a uniform level of direct payments at regional or national level by 2019. The Presidency conclusions from March 2011² identified the need for flexibility at national/regional level, with appropriate transitional periods to avoid disruptive financial consequences.

- Delegations are invited to comment on the impact of the proposal, the rhythm and pace foreseen by the proposal to achieve convergence, including any alternatives.

¹ *PM* the decision on the principle of capping remains open for discussion in the context of the ongoing discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

² Presidency conclusions as finalised and supported by a very large number of delegations in Council at its session on 17 March 2011(doc 7921/11).