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From: General Secretariat  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural development (EAFRD) (*CAP Reform*)  
- *Presidency questionnaire*

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With a view to structuring the debate in Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") at its session on 18 June 2012, delegations will find in the Annex the questionnaire drawn up by the Presidency.

## Presidency questionnaire on Rural Development

Delegations broadly support the principle that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should significantly contribute to addressing the challenges concerning **environment, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation**. This is part of the objective of a greener CAP for the period of 2014-2020 through both Pillars I and II, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy. The Commission proposes in recital 28 of the rural development proposal to set a target to spend a minimum of 25% of the total contribution from the EAFRD to each rural development programme on climate change mitigation and adaptation and land management. During the discussions in the SCA, delegations' opinions were divided. Some delegations opposed a minimum requirement while others welcomed the Commission's proposal and suggested that a binding obligation be set for all Member States. Some delegations requested even the percentage to be increased to 50%. A number of delegations thought that its scope should be extended so as to include, among others, payments to Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive and forestry actions. Against this background:

- *Should the Rural Development regulation contain a requirement for a minimum percentage of the EAFRD budget to be spent on environment related actions, and which measures should be taken into account when calculating the spending on environment related actions?*

**Co-financing rates for rural development support** are part of the Negotiating Box for the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) (MFF)<sup>1</sup>. Delegations have generally requested a simple and targeted system for financing activities to meet the Union objectives for rural development. During the discussions in the SCA some delegations expressed support for the Commission proposal as it stands while other delegations made a number of suggestions for a higher standard rate and higher rates for operations contributing to the objectives of environment and climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as risk management and innovation in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> 10753/12, p. 26.

Furthermore, some delegations requested that there should be no national co-financing for all transfers from Pillar I to Pillar II. Taking this into consideration, delegations are invited to comment on the following question:

- *Is the proposed provision concerning increased EAFRD contribution rates relevant for meeting the objectives of the rural development policy, or should alternative operations qualify to receive a higher rate of co-financing?*

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