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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Conclusions of the 39th Conference of Directors of Paying Agencies
(Amsterdam, 25-27 May 2016)
- Information from the Netherlands delegation

In view of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 10 October 2016, delegations will find attached a document provided by the Netherlands delegation on the above-mentioned subject, that will be presented under "Any other business".

Conclusions of the 39th Conference of Directors of Paying Agencies

The 39th Conference of Directors of Paying Agencies was held in Amsterdam from 25 – 27 May 2016.

Several presentations were given by the European Commission (EC), the European Court of Auditors (ECA), the Conciliation Body among others. Participants attended three workshops on more proportional CAP controls. The results of the conference and workshops were discussed in a forum discussion with participants from the European Parliament, COPA-COGECA, EC, ECA, Conciliation Body and Learning Network.

Discussions were connected by the central theme “short and long term solutions for more proportional CAP controls”. The discussions led to a number of general conclusions:

- Co-operation between EC, ECA and Member States is a key factor to reach more efficiency and proportionality in the CAP-controls and to reduce error rates.
- Regulations are complex and this complexity makes simple implementation impossible. It is very difficult to get simple regulations with so many Member States and other stakeholders involved. We need to work on common understanding: Member States, EC, ECA need to know exactly what is meant in the Regulations and have the same interpretation.
- IT-systems are crucial in an efficient implementation of CAP-controls. Use of satellite imagery is promising for a more effective way of checking area related measures.
- Audits are a heavy burden for Member States, EC and ECA. A single audit approach with a central role for the Certifying Body should be a priority for the next years.

In the three workshops more specific topics were discussed related to the central theme. Each workshop resulted in short and long term solutions for more proportional CAP controls.

Workshop 1: The way(s) to improved RDP error rates

Short term proposal:

- All operations checked but not all invoices: possible, but guidance is needed from the European Commission.

Long term proposal:

- Use simplified cost options to make a proportional multistage system with thresholds: low amounts, simple checks; medium amounts, medium checks; large amounts, normal administrative checks.

Workshop 2: Solutions for more proportional area based CAP controls

Short term proposals:

- Make combination of samples possible to the largest extent to enable one control visit/farm/year
- Create conditions to make the use of remote sensing more accessible, for example organize an awareness workshop with possibilities, provide for free use of satellite imagery
- Stop wasting valuable control time on nitty-gritty issues

Long term proposals:

- Free satellite imagery for 100% checks, followed up by OTSC on worst cases

Workshop 3: Single Audit Concept

Short term proposals:

- European Commission to engage with CB and agree audit strategy
- European Commission should have bilateral meetings with CB on methodology, sampling etc.

Long term proposals:

- European Commission and ECA should work to harmonise approach (within parameters)
- Learning network for certifying bodies, common IT-tools for audit

The next step

The solutions from the workshops are promising. It is very important to make them more practicable and to take the necessary steps in order to work towards realization of the solutions proposed. The conference provided already some suggestions to take those steps:

- The next meeting of the Learning Network on 4th of July.
- More co-operation between Learning Network, Panta Rhei and the Directors Conference, this gives an opportunity to schedule these topics for several meetings to come.
- More continuity between meetings and conferences: follow-up on the conclusions of this Conference can have a more express place on the agenda of future meetings.