



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 14 December 2016  
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**NOTE**

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From: Presidency  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Letter from Ms Gabriela Matečná, President of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council, to Mr László Solymos, President of the "Environment" Council

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Delegations will find in ANNEX a letter from the President of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council, Ms Gabriela Matečná, to the President of the "Environment" Council, Mr László Solymos, concerning the exchange of views on agriculture and climate change that took place at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 12 December 2016 based on document 14970/16. Commissioners Hogan and Arias Cañete are in copy of this letter.

Minister of Agriculture and Rural  
Development of the Slovak Republic  
**Gabriela Matečná**

Brussels, 13 December 2016

Dear President of the "Environment" Council,

Dear László,

I am writing to share with you the outcome of the ministerial exchange of views on agriculture and climate change that took place at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 12 December 2016<sup>1</sup>. In particular, the Ministers focused on agricultural aspects of the proposals on the "Effort Sharing Regulation"<sup>2</sup> and the "LULUCF Regulation"<sup>3</sup>.

Although the "Environment" Council is leading the process, the Agriculture Ministers are of the view that the two proposals, once agreed, can have a major impact on farmers and forest holders and therefore the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council has an interest in discussing the agricultural aspects of the proposals.

In the European Council Conclusions of October 2014, it is stated that the multiple objectives of the agriculture and land use sector, with their lower mitigation potential, should be acknowledged. Most of all, Agriculture Ministers were of the view that generally the Commission has recognised in its proposal on "LULUCF Regulation" the guidance provided in these European Council Conclusions and they welcomed the two proposals that are paving the way for implementation of the Paris Agreement. However, the Ministers stressed once again some elements of these conclusions, in particular the multiple objectives of agriculture and land use sector that are responsible for food production, and the need to ensure coherence between the EU's food security and climate change objectives. Agriculture faces indeed the twin challenges of sustainable food production on the one hand and climate change mitigation and adaptation on the other hand. The Paris Agreement has recognised that climate objectives should be achieved "in a manner that does not threaten food production".

Ministers underlined the specific nature of agriculture and forestry - these are the only economic sectors that both emit and reduce greenhouse gases. Some Ministers were of the view that specific characteristics of Member States are not sufficiently taken into account and positive contribution of agriculture and efforts made so far have not been recognised appropriately.

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<sup>1</sup> 14970/16

<sup>2</sup> 11483/16

<sup>3</sup> 11494/16

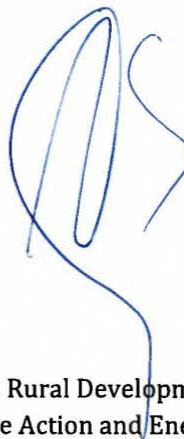
Agriculture Ministers underlined that the climate objectives should not jeopardise sustainable food production.

In the meeting of the commitments under the non-ETS, the flexibilities were considered to be the key element in the proposals on the "Effort Sharing Regulation" and the "LULUCF Regulation". However, the Ministers were of the opinion that there is still a room for improvement regarding the flexibilities from the point of view of agriculture and land use. They reminded the lower mitigation potential of agriculture and land use sector and the fact that these sectors contribute to greenhouse gas mitigation and sequestration. They<sup>4</sup> were of the view that this should be better reflected in the two proposals, in particular by taking the forest management into account in the flexibilities, in order to adequately reflect forest sink and to provide proper incentives. Specific situations in Member States should be taken into account. In addition, the Ministers stressed the need to make sure that Member States have a clear say on the process of setting the forest management reference levels. They also stressed the role of research and innovation in this process, including in relation to harvested wood products provided by forests.

Finally, the Agriculture Ministers underlined that agriculture and land use sector certainly play a role in implementing the Paris Agreement and stressed that these sectors can be part of the solution in combating climate change. But they underscored the importance of well-balanced solutions. The Agriculture Ministers also admitted the need to closely cooperate with the Environment Ministers in order to communicate the concerns related to agricultural aspects of these proposals.

I trust that you will keep in mind our concerns related to agricultural aspects of the proposals on the "Effort Sharing Regulation" and the "LULUCF Regulation" during the discussions in the "Environment" Council and in preparation of the general approach as well as during the future trilogue negotiations.

My warmest regards,



László Sólymos  
Minister of Environment of the Slovak Republic

Copy to:  
Phil Hogan, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development  
Miguel Arias Cañete, European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy

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<sup>4</sup> Except the Netherlands