



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 24 February 2017
(OR. en)

6676/17

AGRI 90
AGRILEG 51
AGRIFIN 19
AGRISTR 18
AGRIORG 22

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Letter on the Omnibus proposal from Mr Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, to Mr Roderick Galdes, Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights

Delegations will find in ANNEX, for information, a letter from Mr Phil Hogan, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, to Mr Roderick Galdes, Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights concerning the Omnibus proposal. Please note that a similar letter has been sent to the President of COMAGRI, Mr Siekierski.



PHIL HOGAN
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Brussels, 23 FEB. 2017
A(2017)

Dear Mr Galdes,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about the state of the discussions in Council on the agricultural part of the Commission's proposal for the so-called omnibus regulation.

As you know, our proposal includes a limited number of targeted changes to the four basic acts of the Common Agricultural Policy. These changes are intended to simplify the policy and remove bottlenecks from the basic acts, while fully respecting the main policy decisions of the 2013 reform. Moreover, many of the changes are optional for the Member States, leaving them the choice of taking advantage of the changes or continuing to apply the current rules. The changes proposed in this package are intended not be controversial and to have the potential to attract large support in both Council and Parliament for the benefit of our farmers. Consequently, it would be possible to meet the ambitious timetable of having the entire omnibus regulation enter into force on 1 January 2018. This would be important to make sure that farmers across Europe benefit from easier rules and procedures for the 2018 Budget.

I fully respect that Council and Parliament may wish to propose amendments to our proposal, which will then be discussed in the trilogues scheduled to begin in early summer. However, I understand that many of the additional changes requested by MEPs could put the intentions of this targeted proposal at risk: they could not only be unrelated to the Commission's initial proposal and its objective of simplification, but also re-open some of the main policy decisions taken in the 2013 CAP reform. This would not be compatible with either the objective of our proposal, or with the ambitious timetable referred to above. Moreover, such amendment proposals could lead to further complexities in the practical application of certain CAP support schemes, and are also at odds with the request for stability in the basic set-up of the schemes as they currently stand, which I constantly hear from both national authorities and the farming community.

*Mr Roderick Galdes
Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights
Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change
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I would therefore urge the Council to focus primarily on those amendments to the Commission's proposal which reflect the objective of simplification and, thereby, to allow for a political agreement between the institutions as soon as possible. The Commission will closely follow the development of the agricultural part of the omnibus proposal and carefully assess whether the objective of simplifying the CAP in the context of the overall package is sufficiently preserved.

I should also say that I am conveying similar concerns to COMAGRI.

I count on your personal support to ensure a successful outcome of this process, so that our farmers and national authorities can benefit from the simplified rules as from 2018.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Hogan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil HOGAN