



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Simplification of Marketing Standards
- Requested by the Visegrad Group plus Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia

Delegations will find in Annex a note from the Visegrad Group plus Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia regarding the above-mentioned subject, to be presented under "Any other business" at the Special Committee on Agriculture on 8 February 2016.

Simplification of Marketing Standards - Joint request of the Visegrad Group plus Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia

On 13 January 2016 the European Commission presented to experts in the CMO Horizontal questions Committee a working document, which is to be a basis for discussions on the implementing and delegated act with ambition to replace fifteen current regulations covering Marketing Standards in ten agricultural sectors. The first draft of the working document had 108 pages not counting the Annexes. The Commission invited Member States to make their observations and comments on the structure and on the overall concept of the document.

We take into account that the European Commission's goal to reduce the current number of more than 200 regulation within the CMO. We are aware of and appreciate the European Commission's effort to simplify legislation in the agricultural sector as much as possible. We strongly support this initiative considering the CAP simplification as a key priority importance and we are fully committed to continuing to collaborate actively with the European Commission in this field.

However, we have some doubts whether the merger of 15 regulations into one implementing and a delegated act is necessarily the best approach. We bear in mind justification provided by the European Commission - the fact that certain elements (some definitions, controls and reporting obligation) of these rules in question are common, regardless of the sectors.

Nevertheless, in our view, the simplification exercise should be viewed through the lenses of not only the legislator, but also from the perspective of those to whom the legislation is addressed. We are concerned that adding Annexes to the (still working) document (which are in the case of Marketing Standards of substantial size) will result in a text, which will have several hundred pages containing an immense number of references and cross-references. Orientation in such legal text will be difficult either for the experts or for the final user in particular. We also have doubts whether it is necessary that those subject working in the sectors such as for example, olive oil and hops should be forced to work with a very extensive regulation of which only a small part is intended for them. In this context, it is worth noting that the Marketing Standards for wine will represent the most sensitive and challenging part of the exercise.

In the light of above, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia call on the European Commission to reconsider its intention to consolidate all provisions relating to the Marketing Standards in ten sectors into one delegate and one implementing act. We believe that the guiding principle of the simplification exercise should not be merely to reduce the number of legislative acts, but to simplify their content in particular so that such acts are easy to be implemented for administrations and easy to be understood by users. Guided by these reasons we request for maintaining sectoral approach in the field of revision of marketing standards and urge the Commission to take this note into account when considering further steps.
