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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: EU Protein Plan
- Information from the Commission

With a view to the Council meeting on 19 February 2018, delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Commission services on the above-mentioned subject.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE AGRICULTURE OF 5 FEBRUARY 2018**NOTE ON PREPARATION OF "A PROTEIN PLAN FOR EUROPE"**

Commissioner Hogan will inform the Member States about the on-going preparation of a Commission report on a Protein Plan for Europe, which is planned to be published by the end of 2018.

The EU protein deficit is widely acknowledged and complexity of the issue, the agronomic conditions in Europe, the economic profitability of these crops in Europe and the existing policy framework make it difficult to propose straightforward solutions.

Plant proteins are an essential component of animal feed as a source of amino-acids for livestock and also for direct human consumption. According to the EU feed industry association FEFAC (2015), about 477 million tonnes of feed stuff are consumed by livestock every year.

The EU demand for feed protein amounts to around 45 million tonnes of crude protein/year. out of which one third is met by soya. For this protein source, the EU self-sufficiency is particularly low with only 5% of EU use. However, EU self-sufficiency is much higher (92%) for feed proteins supplied by unprocessed crops like cereals, oilseeds and pulses.

The Common Agricultural Policy already provides a series of measures which, directly or indirectly, encourage plant protein production in the EU (for instance Voluntary Coupled Support (VCS), the requirements for having Ecological Focus Area and Crop Diversification, Rural Development through Agri-Environment-Climate Measures (AECM) or the European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI). These measures have triggered a positive trend during last years and increased domestic production for various protein plants significantly.

Despite this positive trend, the EU protein deficit remains significant (see also EU protein balance sheets published on the EU Crops Market Observatory website

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/market-observatory/crops/oilseeds-protein-crops/balance-sheets_en).

In this context, the Commission is committed to prepare a report on plant proteins that will build upon existing knowledge and national/ regional experiences. The report will address in particular the following subjects:

- Research and Innovation in plant proteins
- Agronomic challenges and environmental benefits of protein crops
- Development of supply/value chains for EU plant proteins
- Market potential for EU plant proteins in different market segments.

Information will be collected through the organisation of a stakeholder survey, an external market study, thematic workshops, and final EU conference on the topic. Given the multiple ongoing initiatives at Member State and (inter-)regional level, the Commission seeks a very close cooperation with Member State in developing this plan.
