



Brussels, 5 March 2018  
(OR. en)

6743/18

AGRI 115  
RECH 93

**NOTE**

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From: Presidency

To: Delegations

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Subject: Letter from Mr Rumen PORODZANOV, President of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, to Commissioner MOEDAS, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

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Delegations will find in Annex a letter from the President of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council, Mr Rumen PORODZANOV, to the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Mr Carlos MOEDAS, in the light of the exchange of views on the Bioeconomy held at the 19 February 2018 "Agriculture and Fisheries Council".

Dear Commissioner Moedas,

I am writing to share with you the outcome of the ministerial exchange of views on the key aspects of the bioeconomy that took place during the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 19 February 2018.

On this occasion, Ministers discussed the role of agriculture and forestry in the EU Bioeconomy Strategy currently under revision, and exchanged views on how EU and national policies can better support the development of a sustainable and circular bioeconomy and enhance the benefits and opportunities for primary producers in agriculture and forestry.

Ministers stressed the huge potential of the bioeconomy for farmers and foresters, as it can ensure food security while relying on circular and sustainable production systems, and it can provide growth and jobs in rural areas. This potential should be fully exploited in all Member States, and a higher participation of EU-13 countries in Horizon 2020 and the next R&I Framework Programme will help to reach this goal.

There was broad agreement that farmers and foresters need to be better integrated into the new bio-based value chains to enable them to capture more of the created added value, in particular through making the step from providers of biomass to processors and producers of bio-based products and materials. It was emphasized that such added value should not only benefit large producers, but also smaller-scale farmers. The revised EU Bioeconomy Strategy also needs to take into account the wide diversity of production systems and outputs in the Member States.

A shared view was the need to enhance the coherence and synergies between the different EU policies relevant to the bioeconomy, such as R&I, the CAP, the EU Forest Strategy, the circular economy, renewable energy, environmental and cohesion policies. Ministers also agreed that financial support for agricultural research in the bioeconomy should be enhanced in the next R&I Framework Programme. Fostering knowledge and technology transfer, exchanging experiences and disseminating best practices were highlighted as particularly important.

At national level, it was widely acknowledged that the adoption of bioeconomy strategies and friendly regulatory and financial frameworks should be further promoted by the EU Bioeconomy Strategy. The role of education and awareness-raising for farmers (to help them identify new value chains) and consumers (to stimulate market demand) were emphasized, as well as better cooperation among relevant national Ministries and stakeholders involved (research institutions, farmers, industry, academia, etc.). The dissemination of information and exchange of knowledge, ideas, experiences, as well as the involvement of society in the development of the bioeconomy were considered key.

To conclude, Ministers are convinced about the positive impact that the bioeconomy can have on the primary production sector, and about the crucial role the EU Bioeconomy Strategy could play in meeting the objectives of the CAP post 2020. Therefore, I trust that this will serve as useful input to the ongoing revision of the strategy and I invite the European Commission and the Competitiveness Council to take them into consideration during the future discussions on bioeconomy-related research and innovation aspects. We will be happy to contribute further on these matters.

My warmest regards,

President of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Rumen PORODZANOV

copy: Commissioner Hogan

President of the Competitiveness Council

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