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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Outcome of the Congress "CAP Strategic Plans - Exploring Eco-Climate Schemes" (Leeuwarden, 6-8 February 2019)
- Information from the Netherlands delegation

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) a note from the Netherlands delegation presenting the outcome on the "CAP Congress: CAP strategic plans – exploring Eco-schemes", held in Leeuwarden (NL) on 6-8 February, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 18 March 2019.

Outcome on the CAP Congress: CAP strategic plans – exploring Eco-schemes, Leeuwarden (NL), 6-8 February

Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Introduction

From Wednesday 6 to Friday 8 February 2019 the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and the Province of Fryslân, and supported by the Rumanian presidency, hosted a congress ‘‘CAP strategic plans – exploring Eco-Climate schemes’ in Leeuwarden. Around 150 participants from the European Commission, 25 Member States, farmers’ organizations, NGO’s and researchers explored together how to design their National Strategic Plan for the future CAP, with a focus on the proposed eco-schemes.

The program consisted of a plenary session and excursions and workshops with speakers from both the European commission, Member States, farmers’ organisations and NGO’s¹. Furthermore field trips were made to highlight the Dutch collective approach, an in 2016 implemented approach for agri-environmental and climate measures building upon a long tradition in the Netherlands of voluntary cooperation amongst farmers.

The starting point for the discussion were the CAP proposals: how can member states use the instruments of the CAP to accomplish the Common goals of the CAP. The member states experience both similarities and differences when working towards the Common goals. However, the future CAP provides opportunities to member states to design policies for the needs of each country. It also became clear that designing such policies for public goods by farmers, will be a major task in many member states. A task in which countries can help each other. The conference led to cautious optimism: it showed that the CAP proposals give countries opportunities to develop eco-schemes that lead both to better environmental and climate conditions and fit farmers’ practices.

¹ For more information on the program: see www.capcongress.com

Participants broadly shared the view that:

- Society expects an agricultural policy that delivers on a socio-economical and environmental sustainable agriculture and that the new CAP can help accelerate delivery of public goods such as combatting climate change and halting biodiversity loss.
- Member States are faced with different circumstances when working towards the common goals of the CAP. Therefore, flexibility in designing targeted payments is important.
- The architecture of the new CAP, with a focus on performance, simplification and subsidiarity provides the required flexibility. Seizing the opportunities of such flexibility requires a change in mindset; from a common blueprint to national choices and discretion.
- When making those national choices, it is important to involve beneficiaries and other stakeholders at an early stage, to build the results of evaluations in the current period, to work on public acceptance and to exchange best practice between Member States.
- The relationship and interdependence between the different support-measures for sustainability such as direct payments, eco-scheme and the agri-environmental and climate measure, is important to take into consideration.



- Furthermore, communication and advice to the farmer, and keeping administrative burden for the farmer to a minimum are important success factors.
 - Conditionality seems the right fit for preservation of farmland with high value for climate, natural resources and biodiversity, while eco-schemes seem better suited to situations where restoration is the aim. As a consequence it could be an idea to lower the conditionality for regions with a high effort on restoration and eco-schemes, making this more attractive for farmers to join.
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