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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia on the Renewable Energy Directive post 2020
- Information from the Slovak delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Slovak delegation presenting a joint declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia on the Renewable Energy Directive post 2020, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 15 April 2019.

**Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland
and Slovakia on the Renewable Energy Directive post 2020**

Note from the Slovak delegation

Taking into account the commitments of the EU on climate change emerging from various binding documents, which have already been adopted such as the Paris Agreement, Directive of the EP and the Council on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (RED II) as well as the proposed new greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments, set out in the "Clean Planet for All", the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia agreed on the need to express their support for the initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase renewable energy share in the transport mix, in which farmers are directly involved.

One of the most effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in transport is to use renewable energy sources, the so-called biofuels. Their production is directly linked to primary agricultural production and thus ensures its stable and predictable uptake. Biofuel production from local agricultural feedstock contributes to the preservation of jobs and agricultural activities in the EU and at the same time supports energy security. An inevitable element of the production of biofuels is the animal feed production (high protein non-GMO by-products and rapeseed meal), which reduces the dependency on protein imports.

The promotion of the use of biofuels produced under strict rules of sustainability from domestic sources and their subsequent higher blending in fuels placed on the market is the pivotal subject of the Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia on the Directive on the Promotion of Renewable Energy post 2020, enclosed in the annex.

This initiative was also supported by the agricultural chambers of the Visegrad group (V4) countries in the form of the Joint Statement from the Agricultural Chambers and Biofuel Producers of the Visegrad countries on the Introduction of E10.

Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia, on the Renewable Energy Directive post 2020

The Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia, FOLLOWING the Joint Declaration of the Agricultural Ministers of Visegrad Group, Bulgaria and Romania on the Renewable Energy Directive post 2020 agreed on 21 September 2017, and FOLLOWING the adoption of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council 2018/2001 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (“RED II”), have agreed on the following steps and priorities with respect to the promotion of renewable energy sources in the implementation of the RED II Directive:

We repeatedly EMPHASISE the importance of the utilization of renewable energy sources of EU agricultural and forest origin aiming at enhancing the energy security and the environmental, economic and social sustainability of Europe. We STRESS the importance of these resources as a vital tool to increase both jobs and growth within the EU and its crucial role in achievement of the goals of energy and climate policy as well the aims of the Common Agricultural Policy as they are declared in the Article 39 TFEU.

We BELIEVE that the targets under RED II shall be achieved primarily by the local sourced production ensuring energy security and preservation of jobs and agricultural activities in the EU. Achievement of these well-constructed targets will effectively support at the same time rural development and building food security of the EU by acceleration of the co-production of protein feed and keeping agricultural land productive. We are CONVINCED that EU has sufficient possibilities to produce adequate volumes of food and feed needed as well as demand for the production of conventional biofuels. We BELIEVE that crop-based biofuels are currently one of the most feasible and widely available source of renewable energy used in transport sector.

We HIGHLIGHT the necessity to reach a regional agreement on the crucial aspects of the implementation of RED II, to achieve market stabilization, sustainability and further development of agricultural production.

We AGREE to take all necessary steps to establish the contribution of the biofuels of EU agricultural origin (produced from food and feed crops) to the targets set by RED II at the maximum level of 7% at national levels.

We SUPPORT all activities leading to use of EU-origin agricultural non-food products and agricultural residues as feedstocks and forest biomass for the production of biofuels, in particular advanced biofuels, as well as to use of domestically collected used cooking oil.

We AGREE to take rapidly all necessary steps to create a favourable environment for the use of fuels with higher blends of renewable energy of agricultural origin such as E10 (max 10% blends of bioethanol in petrol) aiming at achieving climate goals and decrease of energy dependency. We BELIEVE that introduction of E10 as the common and only bioethanol blending standard in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia shall be realized not later than 2020 ensuring effective achievement of energy and climate targets and keep the option of the utilisation of conventional biofuels at 7% as it is outlined in RED II.

We TAKE INTO ACCOUNT that the European Commission decided on the criteria for determination of the high indirect land-use change-risk food and feed crop-based biofuels and the certification of low indirect land-use change-risk biofuels, bioliquids and biomass fuels in the delegated act on the basis of the comprehensive analysis and scientific research. We STRESS that the special interest shall be devoted to the import of the biofuels and raw materials where there is the highest risk of indirect land use change as proven by the scientific results with special attention to the risk of low indirect land-use change-risk biofuels misuse.

We REITERATE that the best available science on indirect land use change, including that commissioned by the European Commission consistently and unwaveringly stresses the massive potential of Europe to produce low ILUC risk crop based biofuels and so INSIST that the European Commission move forward on the certification of low land use change risk biofuels with a view towards allowing this unique opportunity that exists in Europe to ensure the success of 2030 renewable energy and climate goals, as well as to support rural economies across Europe.

We EMPHASISE the need to consider the strict conditions and control of EU agricultural production and the importance of EU production of renewable energy of agricultural origin as a substantial element of high protein feed production. High protein non-GMO by-products from crop-based biofuels production are inevitable element of the EU animal agricultural production and therefore their availability needs to be ensured and developed in order to avoid increasing dependency on imports and guarantee food security in the EU. We WISH to represent our common position both individually and together in future negotiations regarding E10 implementation in our region.

Luxembourg, 15.4.2019
