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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Importance of strategic frameworks for cooperation with partner countries (Implementation of the Deforestation Regulation) <i>- Information from the German delegation</i>

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the German delegation on the above-mentioned subject which will be dealt with under ‘Any other business’ at the Council meeting (‘Agriculture and Fisheries’) on 20 November 2023.

Importance of strategic frameworks for cooperation with partner countries*Information from the German delegation*

In Germany's view, the EU-regulation for deforestation-free products is a milestone for global forest protection. We expect that this new regulation significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss, by promoting the consumption of 'deforestation-free' products and thereby reducing the EU's impact on global deforestation and forest degradation. However, reactions from producing countries underline the expectation towards the Commission and Member States to provide support to create enabling framework conditions for producers to comply with the new requirements.

In our view, the comprehensive strategic framework for cooperation with third countries, which the Commission is currently finalising, is an essential element of the regulation, in order to reach the envisaged impact. Together with other Member States, we stressed this view throughout the past negotiations that led to the regulation as it came into force this June. There is a clear necessity to complement our activities within EU to prepare for an impactful application of this milestone regulation with activities to support third countries in this regard. As reflected in our past positions, we do see this necessity in particular valid for the engagement with smallholders, counteracting their potential exclusion from supply chains to the EU and, above all, to ensure their continued existence in a more sustainable environment.

As such, we are eager to further exchange on the comprehensive strategic framework for cooperation and how the Commission aligns it with the Team Europe Initiative on Deforestation as one of its implementation measures. Furthermore, we would like to encourage an open discussion, how such comprehensive strategic frameworks can foster cooperation with partner countries supporting further agricultural policies under the EU-Green Deal.