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#### NOTE

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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee / Special Committee on Agriculture / Council
Subject:	Farm to Fork Strategy - <i>Exchange of views</i>

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In preparation of the AGRIFISH Council on 20 July 2020, delegations will find in annex the three questions proposed by the Presidency for the exchange of views of the Agriculture Ministers on the Farm to Fork Strategy at the above-mentioned Council meeting. Question 1 will be presented to the SCA on 13 July, while questions 2 and 3 will be presented to Coreper on 15 July 2020.

**Question 1**

The Green Deal and the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy address many dimensions of our food system, from animal and plant production to food labelling and international trade. According to the Commission, we should set the goal of creating a "*fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system*", which can serve as an example to the whole world. Farmers, fishermen and other actors in the food chain, who are already engaged in the transition towards more sustainable practices, should be rewarded for this. And there should be incentives for others to also make the transition. The transition to this new food system will be underpinned by the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

At the videoconference on 8 June 2020, Ministers generally welcomed the F2F Strategy proposed by the Commission but also questioned how the strategy and the specific targets therein needed to be incorporated into the CAP reform proposals and what this would mean for the approval process of the national CAP Strategic Plans. Ministers were generally pleased with the Commission's analysis that the CAP reform proposals are fit for the purpose of meeting the increased EU's sustainability and climate ambitions. At the same time, however, Ministers highlighted the importance of respecting the principle of subsidiarity and the bottom-up approach in the delivery of the new CAP. Quite a number of Ministers were critical about the extent to which the Commission's proposed Strategies and targets should already be included in the national Strategic Plans.

As described in its Staff Working Document (8228/20), the Commission proposes to make recommendations to each Member State, which should be taken into account in the drawing up and approval of national strategic plans. These recommendations would address issues within the nine specific CAP objectives. This should help Member States to ensure that the objectives and targets of the Green Deal and the F2F and Biodiversity Strategies are taken into account in the formal submission of the draft Strategic Plans. The recommendations will be part of the criteria to be used by the Commission to evaluate and approve each Strategic Plan.

Against the background of the proposed approach to implement the F2F Strategy and its targets through Commission recommendations, the Presidency would be interested to hear the views of Ministers on the following question:

***What opportunities and challenges do you see in the approach proposed by the Commission to implement the Farm to Fork Strategy and its targets through Commission recommendations, which will be taken into account in the (approval of) national strategic plans, and what guard rails are needed to ensure sufficient transparency of the process for all MS?***

## **Question 2**

The Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy aims at a more sustainable and integrated agricultural and food policy. This includes reducing the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food system and strengthening its resilience, guaranteeing food security in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss, leading the global transition to competitive sustainability and tapping into new opportunities. The food chain, from production to consumption, should have a neutral or positive environmental impact, helping to preserve and, if necessary, restore the land, freshwater and marine resources on which food systems depend.

The underlying approach is systemic: it focuses on all stakeholders from agricultural production to consumers and takes their interactions into account. The proposed measures are designed to increase sustainability and thus have a positive impact on health, the environment and climate, as well as on the economic conditions for primary producers. The strategy acknowledges the efforts made to date; however, it states that further efforts are needed to achieve ambitious targets, including reductions of at least 50 % by 2030 in each of the following categories:

- nutrient losses, whilst reducing the use of fertilisers by at least 20 %;
- the use of and risks linked to pesticides;
- the use of antibiotics.

In addition, by 2030, at least 25 % of agricultural land should be farmed in accordance with the rules of organic production. These four objectives are also an integral part of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

*Are the priorities and measures appropriate and sufficient to achieve the multiple objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy in relation to environmental and climate protection, promoting public health and more sustainable agriculture? In which areas do you see conflicts of objectives that are not yet sufficiently addressed by the proposed measures and are there complementary measures that should be taken into account?*

### **Question 3**

The corona pandemic has brought the importance of more robust, sustainable and resilient food systems into sharp focus. The Farm to Fork Strategy is designed to promote such food systems within the EU. The intention is that all actors in the food chain play a part in achieving a food chain based on sustainable production. Consumers need to be put in the position where they can decide in favour of sustainable food. At the same time, a sustainable food system must enable people to have a sustainable and healthy diet and the businesses involved to earn a sufficient income. The strategy is aimed at making food systems more sustainable by reducing negative effects on the environment. At the same time, access to sufficient, nutritious and sustainable food for all groups in society should remain affordable. This will place significant demands on agriculture, forestry and the food industry. The strategy holds up the prospect of economic opportunities, which are intended to benefit first and foremost those primary producers who decide to adopt the sustainability targets. Increased transparency concerning production conditions and better information for consumers should make it easier for consumers to choose healthy and sustainable diets, which will in turn benefit their health and quality of life, and thus also reduce healthcare costs. Along with setting these targets, the strategy also identifies a series of possible ways to attain a high level of sustainability. At the same time, in many areas the strategy leaves considerable latitude for implementation.

***Q3: Are the measures referred to in the Farm to Fork Strategy appropriate and adequate to make the sustainable and healthy choice the easier choice for the consumer? How can it be ensured that those who make efforts in terms of sustainability also benefit from any increased price charged for the end product?***