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#### NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

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Subject: Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania on the need for a transparent procedure for the adoption of the CAP strategic plans and to make the new delivery model functional  
*- Information from the Hungarian delegation, on behalf of the Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovak delegations*

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Delegations will find in the Annex a joint Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia) and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania on the need for a transparent procedure for the adoption of the CAP strategic plans and to make the new delivery model functional to be presented by the Hungarian delegation under "Any other business" items at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 15 November 2021.

**JOINT DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF  
THE VISEGRAD GROUP (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia)  
AND BULGARIA, CROATIA and ROMANIA**

**on the need for a transparent procedure for the adoption of the CAP strategic  
plans and to make the new delivery model functional**

*Budapest, 8 October 2021*

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania met in Budapest on the 8th of October 2021 upon the invitation of Hungary currently holding the V4 Presidency and discussed and agreed our common position on the preconditions to make the adoption procedure of the CAP strategic plans transparent and to make the new delivery model functional.

**I. As regards the adoption of the CAP legislative package, we**

- (1) WELCOME the political agreement reached in June 2021 between the co-legislators, which achieves a balance between all three pillars of sustainability while at the same time addressing environmental and climate challenges in the most effective way.
- (2) POINT OUT to a common concern that because of the prolongation of the negotiations on the CAP reform dossier and the expected late adoption of the legislative package, Member States will face serious time pressure to meet the national CAP Strategic Plans' submission deadline of the 1st of January 2022. Therefore, ASK the Commission for a flexible approach if it will be needed.
- (3) URGE the European Parliament to convene the plenary vote on the three CAP basic regulations at the earliest possible occasion.

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- (4) INVITE the Commission to do its best in order to as soon as possible present, discuss and adopt the secondary legislative acts that are indispensable for the submission of the national CAP Strategic Plans and also crucial for paying agencies in order to ensure that accreditation criteria are set up in time for the new CAP (and subsidies paid in due time)

**II. As regards the adoption of the CAP Strategic plans, we**

- (5) AGREE that one of the most important and sensitive phases is the assessment procedure leading up to the adoption and modification of the CAP Strategic Plans and HIGHLIGHT that the adoption procedure should be fair, objective and transparent.
- (6) In order to ensure legal certainty, CALL UPON the Commission to respect the final text of Chapter III of Title V of the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation as agreed by the co-legislators, and base its approval decision exclusively on acts, which are legally binding on Member States.
- (7) UNDERLINE that in the spirit of subsidiarity the political decisions in relation to the way and scale in addressing the goals of the CAP in the national Strategic Plans should remain as the sole competence of the Member States.
- (8) WELCOME the fact that the time limit for the approval of the Strategic Plans by the Commission has been reduced to 6 months, STRESS however that it is of utmost importance to organize this period in the most efficient way.
- (9) INVITE the Commission to be a constructive partner in the swift adoption of the CAP Strategic Plans by ensuring a continuous dialogue with Member States and provide its comments and questions on a regular basis, in the form of a rolling review. It would enable a better use of human resources in Member States and also an optimal time management. UNDERLINE in this regard that the detailed rules on the so-called “stop-the-clock” mechanism should support this approach.

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- (10) INVITE the Commission to regularly update the Council on the process of approval of the CAP Strategic Plans, including the fulfilment of the EU-wide targets and INVITE the Council Presidency to organize regular exchange of views at the meetings of the Special Committee on Agriculture.
- (11) EMPHASIZE that the finalization of the institutional setup as part of the governance system at national level is a complex and time-consuming exercise. Therefore CALL ON the Commission to accept this special circumstance when initially assessing the submitted national CAP Strategic Plans.
- (12) DECLARE that a timely adoption of the CAP Strategic Plans is an absolute necessary precondition to ensure legal certainty for the first payments in 2023, taken into account the time necessary for preparing the implementation framework at national level (national legislation, development of the integrated system, communication campaign for farmers etc.).

**III. As regards the functionality of the new delivery model, we**

- (13) POINT OUT to another common concern that the introduction of the new delivery model (NDM), while aiming to provide Member States with higher flexibility, could also generate increased administrative burden due to the novel approach to implementation.
- (14) COUNT ON the Commission to assist the implementation of the NDM in such a way that it could contribute to the real simplification of the CAP.
- (15) SHARE the view that a fully functional NDM should be built around the following fundamentals:
- the Commission should exploit the potential advantages of the single audit approach and take assurance of the work of the certification body;
  - for legal certainty there has to be a clear-cut, objective set of rules for cases where pre-established values, such as unit amounts or milestones are not met

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- in the course of the implementation and explanations, action plans or remedial actions become necessary;
- (16) CALL UPON the Commission to consider this declaration when finalizing the secondary legislation and assessing the CAP Strategic Plans of the Member States.

 ..... Ministry of Agriculture Hungary	 ..... Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Slovakia
 ..... Ministry of Agriculture Czech Republic	 ..... Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Poland
 ..... Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Bulgaria	 ..... Ministry of Agriculture Croatia
 ..... Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Romania	