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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Special Committee on Agriculture / Council

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Subject: The European Green Deal - agricultural aspects
- Exchange of views

1. With a view to the exchange of views between Ministers on the above-mentioned topic at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 27 January 2020, delegations will find attached a Presidency paper together with questions to help structure the discussion.
2. The Special Committee on Agriculture is invited to take note of the Presidency paper and to forward it to the Council for the exchange of views.

The European Green Deal - agricultural aspects

Presidency paper

1. The European Council in December 2019 endorsed the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. One Member State, at this stage, could not commit to implement this objective as far as it is concerned, and the European Council will come back to this in June 2020.
2. At the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council in December 2019, during the discussion on the Presidency progress report on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), many ministers explicitly mentioned the European Green Deal, also in the context of adequate funding of the future CAP. In April, July and November 2019, the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council held debates on the environmental and climate-related aspects of post-2020 CAP¹.
3. The Commission's Communication from 28 November 2018 "A Clean Planet for all: A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy" set out a vision on how to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council in May 2019 had an exchange of views on the agricultural aspects of this communication.² In addition, the informal "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council meeting in September 2019 was linked to the contribution of agriculture to the climate objectives by 2050 and Ministers held a discussion based on the Presidency paper "Reshaping farmers' role in climate action - Promoting sustainable farming through soil carbon sequestration".

¹ 8359/19, 10622/19, 14051/19.

² 7672/19 REV 2, wk 6127/2019.

4. On 11 December 2019, the Commission published its Communication "The European Green Deal"³, which sets out a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive climate-neutral economy. It proposes a wide range of actions in different policy areas under the headings listed below, together with an indicative timetable for all measures, which are strongly interlinked and require a holistic approach.
- Climate ambition
 - Clean, affordable and secure energy
 - Industrial strategy for a clean and circular economy
 - Sustainable and smart mobility
 - Greening the CAP / 'Farm to Fork' strategy
 - Preserving and protecting biodiversity
 - Towards zero-pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment
 - Mainstreaming sustainability in all EU policies
 - The EU as a global leader
 - Working together - A European Climate Pact
5. It is underlined in the Communication that all EU actions and policies will have to contribute to the European Green Deal objectives and that it will require intense coordination to exploit the available synergies across all policy areas. According to the Communication, to deliver the European Green Deal, there is a need to rethink policies for clean energy supply across the economy, industry, production and consumption, large-scale infrastructure, transport, food and agriculture, construction, taxation and social benefits.
6. Under the "Farm to Fork" chapter of the Communication, it is underlined that European farmers are key to managing the transition. The Farm to Fork Strategy should strengthen their efforts to tackle climate change, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity. The CAP should remain one of the key tools to support these efforts while ensuring a decent living for farmers and their families. The Commission's proposals for the CAP for 2021 to 2027 stipulate that at least 40% of the CAP's overall budget should contribute to climate action.

³ 15051/19 + ADD 1.

7. The Commission's Communication underlines the role of the national strategic plans for agriculture in the context of the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy in contributing to the increased use of sustainable practices, such as precision agriculture, organic farming (including the need to increase the area under organic farming), agro-ecology, agro-forestry and stricter animal welfare standards. Furthermore, according to the Communication, measures such as eco-schemes should reward farmers for improved environmental and climate performance, including managing and storing carbon in the soil, using alternative plant protection products and improved nutrient management to improve water quality and reduce emissions.
8. The aim of the Farm to Fork Strategy is to contribute to achieving a circular economy, as well as to reduce the environmental impact of the food processing and retail sectors by taking action on transport, storage, packaging and food waste. According to the Commission, the Farm to Fork strategy will also contain proposals to improve the position of farmers in the value chain.
9. According to the roadmap for key actions accompanying the Communication, the Farm to Fork Strategy will be published in spring 2020 and examination of the draft national strategic plans, with reference to the ambitions of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, will take place in 2020-2021.
10. In addition to the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Communication outlines various other actions which are likely to include aspects of interest to the agriculture sector, such as the following: European "Climate Law" (March 2020), National Energy and Climate Plans (June 2020), legislative waste reforms in the framework of circular economy (from 2020), assessment of sustainable alternative fuels (from 2020), EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (March 2020), New EU Forest Strategy (2020), Zero-pollution action plan for water, air and soil (2021), and the Just Transition Mechanism (January 2020).
11. Furthermore, the Commission plans to develop a long-term vision for rural areas with the aim of improving their opportunities in the circular and bio-economy.

12. The CAP has already moved from an initial focus only on food security and farmers' incomes to a wider set of objectives, including the provision of healthy food in a sustainable manner. Agriculture needs to contribute to the EU climate objectives towards 2050 and should be part of the solution. At the same time the key role of European farmers - to ensure food security - should not be forgotten. A balanced approach is therefore needed.
13. At the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 27 January 2020, Ministers will be invited to discuss the key elements of the Communication related to agriculture in order to provide guidance on next steps. With a view to structuring the debate, the Presidency has prepared three questions as set out below.

Questions for Ministers

- 1) *The European Green Deal suggests a series of key policies and measures aiming at contributing to the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050. Does the future CAP provide an adequate framework in order to accomplish this ambition?*
 - 2) *In the field of agriculture, which other tools could be used besides the future CAP in order to contribute to the ambitions set out in the European Green Deal?*
 - 3) *What elements of the package do you consider particularly important for further examination at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council?*
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