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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Communication for a Vision for Agriculture and Food

With a view to the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 24 March 2025, delegations will find in the Annex a Presidency note on the above-mentioned subject.

On 19 February 2025 the European Commission adopted the Communication “A Vision for Agriculture and Food” (ST 6385/25), presenting its reflections on the future of agriculture and food in Europe. The Vision suggests responses to the challenges of recent years, including the concerns raised by farmers and Member States. It emphasises the need for close cooperation with farmers, the food chain actors and civil society, and envisages increasing the long-term competitiveness and attractiveness of the agri-food sector and its sustainability. The details of the implementation of the Vision are not yet clear and require further explanation by the Commission. Similarly, there is no information on the future budget of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the Communication.

On 24 February 2025 the Commission presented the Communication to the Agricultural and Fisheries Council, as an AOB item, where ministers gave their initial, positive assessment of the document, indicating that it is a good basis for discussing measures to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of European agriculture.

The Vision contains many references and conclusions that indicate that competitiveness will be a priority area of the CAP after 2027. The role of competitiveness of the European economy, including the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, is also indicated in the “Competitiveness Compass for the EU” (ST 5785/25). “A Vision for agriculture and food” indicates that it is important to maintain food security and that the sector brings tangible benefits to the European economy. The competitiveness of European agriculture is also a guarantee for employment and the development of many agriculture-related industries including European processing industry. Reducing inputs dependencies and the shape of trade agreements can be a challenge to the competitiveness of European agriculture.

The Vision points to the following important issues: the key role of the CAP in supporting and stabilising farmers' incomes, sustainable livestock sector, a territorial approach to food production, shortening supply chains, innovation, improving knowledge and competence in agriculture. The Vision presents the need to provide reliable information to consumers.

Action on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as on biodiversity and the protection of ecosystems, are also underlined, in particular in a context of worsening access to natural resources (especially water) and increasingly frequent adverse weather events. The Vision also emphasises the great importance of green transformation and the associated social responsibility.

According to the Vision, there is a need to place greater emphasis on building resilience of the agriculture sector to economic and environmental shocks. It is about proper management of farm and sector-wide resources under current climatic and economic conditions, investments and digital transition.

The Vision emphasises the important role of research, innovation, knowledge and skills enhancement in creating an enabling environment for the European agri-food economy. In its Communication, the Commission points to the development of digitalisation as a driver for further farm transformation, building resilience and sustainability.

The Communication points out that the market offers diverse opportunities for agricultural income, shaping the conditions in which farmers operate, determining efficiency and directions. The market influences all aspects of farming, from production to distribution, and its functioning can create both barriers and opportunities.

The Presidency suggests the following questions to guide the Council debate at its meeting on 24 March 2025:

1. Do you consider the Commission's plans outlined in the Vision to be sufficient to strengthen the competitiveness and resilience of the European agriculture? If not, what further actions do you suggest?
2. The Vision refers to the need for farmers to get revenue from various sources of the market, including new complementary income sources. Do you find this achievable and, if so, what is the best way to reach this objective, taking into account market, climatic and structural challenges?
3. What priority action can the Commission, in addition to the measures provided by the CAP, take to create an enabling environment for innovation and new technologies in food and agriculture, and to provide farmers with the widest possible access to those?