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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of
26 May 2026:
EU agriculture under massive pressure – EU must act
*- Information from Austria, France and Italy, supported by Bulgaria,
Croatia, Finland, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain*

More than 10 million farmers across Europe ensure the local production of high-quality, safe and sustainably produced food for over 400 million European citizens. This is not merely an achievement - it is a sensitive pillar under increasing pressure, one that is fundamentally rooted in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which plays a crucial role in stabilising farm incomes, securing food supply, and enabling the sector to withstand growing economic, environmental, and geopolitical challenges.

The European agri-food sector stands at the heart of food security. Yet its importance goes far beyond this role: it is a critical economic pillar of the Union, closely linked to environmental sustainability, rural areas- from alpine to coastal livelihoods, and the EU's strategic autonomy. Today, however, this foundation faces existential threats ranging from climate change and geopolitical instability to rising production costs and declining farm viability.

The agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture sector is currently operating in an increasingly volatile market shaped by geopolitical tensions. Shifting global trade relations between the EU and its partners are creating growing uncertainty for European producers. This uncertainty is further intensified by sharply rising costs for essential inputs, such as fertilizers, energy and animal feed, while margins continue to shrink. Recent developments show a particularly negative trend in field crops, where input costs have risen disproportionately compared to farm-gate prices.

At the same time, farmers are confronted with steadily increasing administrative burden. Expanding bureaucracy, additional regulatory requirements and extensive documentation obligations consume valuable time and resources, often pushing producers below the threshold of economic viability.

In parallel, European farmers and producers face intensifying competition from imports originating in third-countries, where production often takes place under lower environmental, social and regulatory standards. This creates an uneven playing field within the internal market and risks undermining both the competitiveness and the sustainability ambitions of European agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture.

Against this background, transparency for consumers and regulatory parity between European and non-European producers remain insufficient. Clear and consistent information on the origin of food products is still lacking across many categories, limiting consumers' ability to make informed choices. This lack of transparency weakens the visibility of European production standards and undermines the position of European farmers in the marketplace.

In the Vision for Agriculture and Food the European Commission addresses the essential link between farming, territory and food and proposes an extension of the country of origin labelling in line with sectoral specificities and Single Market rules. We therefore urge the Commission to rapidly present the announced legislative proposal revising the FIC Regulation ((EU) No 1169/2011) with a view to reinforce mandatory EU-wide country-of-origin labeling, and to extend it to as many food products as possible. Such a measure would empower consumers to make informed purchasing decisions, strengthen the position of European farmers in the food supply chain, and promote fair competition by making production conditions more transparent. In the long term, it would also contribute to enhancing food sovereignty and reinforcing the resilience of European agriculture.