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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the “Agriculture and Fisheries” Council on 28-29 September 2026: The importance of the CMO for Fruit and Vegetables - Information from Belgium

The Common Market Organisation (CMO) for fruit and vegetables is one of the most successful instruments of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Its rules and measures manage the production and trade of most agricultural products to stabilise markets, ensure steady incomes for farmers, and continued supplies for consumers.

Across the Union, the CMO has for decades formed the backbone of the organisation of the fruit and vegetable sector. Through producer organisations (POs) and associations of producer organisations (APOs), the CMO strengthens the position of farmers within the food supply chain, supports investments in innovation and sustainability, and contributes to stable market outlets for European produce. Belgium, where growers have organised themselves under this framework since the 1970s, is a clear example of its benefits.

1. Why Farmers Need the Fruit and Vegetables CMO

Growers gain a stronger bargaining position in relation to buyers by organising in POs. This allows them to better respond to market fluctuations and invest collectively in a stronger supply chain. The **European Court of Auditors (ECA)** recently reinforced this view: in its 2026 report¹, the Court confirmed that POs play a crucial role in strengthening farmers' position within the food chain and in facilitating investments related to sustainability, innovation and risk management. These findings underline that the fruit and vegetables CMO is a proven and effective policy instrument that deserves to retain a **strong and distinct place** within the future European agricultural policy framework.

The economic impact of the CMO is significant. Through the operational programmes of POs, the sector receives substantial annual support from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF), without requiring national co-financing. Belgium, for instance, is among the Member States that make particularly effective use of this European instrument.

This way, essential objectives for a future-oriented agricultural sector are supported: production planning, concentration of supply, quality improvement, innovation, research, crisis management, climate adaptation and the sustainability of production systems. Within the CMO, large efforts are put into advisory services for growers, research and knowledge development, and investments that **strengthen the resilience and sustainability of the sector**.

The CMO can help drive the transition to a more sustainable and climate-resilient fruit and vegetables sector. In Belgium, the largest share of expenditure is dedicated to sustainability measures, followed by environmentally friendly production techniques and biodiversity and climate-related actions. Consequently, the majority of available funding is directly channelled towards these objectives.

The CMO also plays an important role in crisis prevention and risk management. POs have access to instruments such as market withdrawals, free distribution to charitable organisations and other market management measures that help farmers cope with exceptional market situations. This collective approach **enhances the sector's resilience** to both economic and climatic shocks.

¹ [Report | European Court of Auditors](#)

Furthermore, POs often operate across several Member States. A European policy framework is therefore essential to ensure a **level playing field** and to further **promote cross-border cooperation and market integration**.

2. State of Play

The ongoing discussions on the post-2027 CAP raise important questions about the future role of sectoral interventions, including the fruit and vegetables CMO, within the future policy framework.

This framework should ensure that sector-specific instruments remain **sufficiently visible, predictable and effective** in supporting POs. In this context, careful consideration should be given to the potential implications of weakening the current sectoral approach or the integration of sector-specific instruments into broader national funding frameworks. We must preserve the strong EU-wide sectoral approach that has contributed to the success of the fruit and vegetable sector across several Member States, including Belgium.

Against the backdrop of the increasingly international nature of POs and marketing structures, a coherent European framework is critical to ensure **consistency and a level playing field** throughout the European Union (EU), foster cooperation within the supply chain and reinforce the bargaining position of farmers and growers.

3. Preserving the Fruit and Vegetables CMO post-2027

Against the backdrop of increasing pressure on farmers' position in the food supply chain, further efforts are needed to strengthen their bargaining power. POs are among the most effective instruments to achieve this. They enable growers to market collectively, coordinate supply, invest jointly and create greater added value for their members, while contributing to a strong and well-functioning agricultural value chain.

For the EU, it is therefore important that the CMO remains a **clear and recognisable European policy instrument**. Maintaining a strong CMO within the CAP post-2027 provides legal certainty and continuity for the sector, while supporting the cooperation and collective action that are essential to strengthen farmers' position in the market as well as the sector's competitiveness, resilience and sustainability.