



JANUSZ WOJCIECHOWSKI
Commissioner for Agriculture

Brussels, Ares(2020) 4582990

Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 15 July 2020 regarding the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the European Green Deal. Executive Vice-President Timmermans has requested me to reply on his behalf. Please accept my apology for the delay in replying.

I welcome the engagement of Greece to fully support the vision laid out in the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.

Based on the Commission CAP proposal, the Member States will continue to earmark at least 30% of their EU Pillar II funding to be spent on measures directly targeting the environment and climate.

This requirement, in combination with a substantial share of support directed to eco-schemes, will allow for targeted support to practices tackling key concerns, in particular carbon sequestration, biodiversity loss and water pollution, whilst ensuring a level-playing field among Member States. For this reason, the Commission is positively disposed to dedicating a minimum share of the fund for direct payments to eco-schemes.

With respect to the risk of losing funds, my services are paying attention to this issue. A dialogue has been initiated with Member States at the Council level by the German presidency.

Regarding your concerns on the usage of the Next Generation EU funds, the additional rural development allocations are expected to address the new specific objective of economic recovery through operations to be planned in the future CAP Strategic Plans.

I understand that the external convergence of direct payments is of high priority for Greece. However, the Commission considers that the agreement reached by the European leaders at the July European Council strikes a good balance.

Mr Mavroudis Vouridis
Minister of Rural Development and Food
Greece

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With a view to the Green Deal objectives, it is important that all farmers across the EU, contribute to delivering on enhanced environmental and climate ambition. In line with the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will stimulate the food industry to offer healthy and sustainable food products and propose mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling.

It will consider proposing the extension of mandatory origin or provenance indications to certain products, while fully taking into account impacts on the single market. The EU will also promote an EU sustainable food-labelling framework. The Farm to Fork Strategy identifies generating fairer economic returns and competitiveness of the food sector as key elements to achieving a transition of Europe's food system.

In parallel, the EU will scale up its fight against food fraud to achieve a level playing field for operators and strengthen the powers of control and enforcement authorities.

Regarding your concerns on the EU targets in relation to pesticides set out in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, it is crucial to ensure better protection of people's health and well-being, Greece, as well as all other Member States, is invited to contribute to the achievement of these targets, taking into account your specific situation as well as the recommendations for the CAP Strategic Plans that the Commission services are currently preparing.

You have also mentioned the need for an impact assessment on the targets of the strategies. These targets are aspirational targets considered key to ensuring sustainable food production and reverting biodiversity loss. The Commission will carry out impact assessments for legislative initiatives that are part of the Green Deal, including for possible future legal targets. The European Commission is currently preparing a comprehensive impact assessment on the challenge of increasing Europe's climate ambition for 2030 to a reduction of GHG emissions by 50% or 55% as compared to 1990.

Farmers will play a key role in sectors linked to the recovery of the economy, in relation to the green transition or the development of the bio-economy, justifying the scope of the additional allocations.

Building a sustainable and resilient food system will require taking into account the effects and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in the discussion and consultation with the Council, the European Parliament as well as with stakeholders.

I am looking forward to a continued constructive dialogue with you and your services on all these important topics.

Sincerely yours,

(e-signed)

Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI