



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels, 07.07.2020
Ares (2020) 2558003

Dear Honourable Member,

I would like to thank you for your letter of 14 May 2020 concerning the adoption by the Commission of the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies in light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

In line with the European Green Deal, these two strategies propose ambitious EU actions and commitments to halt biodiversity loss in Europe and worldwide and to transform our food systems to become more competitive and more sustainable.

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis underlines the importance of ensuring a resilient economy and a robust and sustainable food system. The EU Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies will be central to guiding our recovery following the crisis.

Farming and the food system are already under pressure because of declining biodiversity and climate change. Merely compensating farmers for their losses is no viable option in the long run. We need to ensure the transition of the food system and support farmers in this transition, which will open new business opportunities and diversify sources of income. Obviously, this will require investments, also in knowledge, and a policy to ensure that no one is left behind. This is the only way to ensure the long-term viability of our farming sector and thus of our food security.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will continue to be key in supporting farmers in the transition towards a more sustainable food system. The 2018 CAP reform proposals focus on sustainability and tightly link CAP support to environment, climate and food safety legislation. I count on your support in the negotiations with the Council on these proposals.

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On 27 May 2020, in the context of the response to the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, the Commission proposed to strengthen the resilience of the agri-food and fisheries sectors and provide the necessary scope for crisis management through an additional €9 billion for the Common Agricultural Policy and an additional €500 million for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. On top of that, the Commission proposed to reinforce the budget for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development by €15 billion to support farmers and rural areas in making the structural changes necessary in line with the European Green Deal. This will also help to achieve the ambitious climate and environmental targets in the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies.

I acknowledge the difficulties the European Parliament is currently facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I nevertheless trust that we will continue working on the newly adopted strategies and launch a transparent and inclusive discussion on the directions they propose.

I look forward to working closely with both the European Parliament and the Council to ensure the rapid implementation of these strategies, in full partnership with all relevant stakeholders and citizens.

Yours faithfully,

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Ursula von der Leyen