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Directorate C. Strategy, simplification and Policy Analysis
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MINUTES

VIDEO CONFERENCE WITH COPA-COGECA ON 9 DECEMBER 2020

Participants:

- Copa-Cogeca (CC) [REDACTED]
- Commissioner Wojciechowski, [REDACTED]

Aim of the meeting was to discuss controversial points on future CAP. The main question of **Copa-Cogeca** (CC) was what outcome farmers can expect from CAP negotiations. Referring to discussions with VP Timmermans last week, PP expressed disappointment about the VP's position to allocate "less funds for more", as this is not sustainable for European farmers in the long-run. According to the VP, eco-schemes would provide sufficient funding for the transition, while CC is concerned that financial support is not sufficient, as retailers and food processors would transfer additional costs for higher environmental and food safety standards to farmers.

PP voiced concerns that VP Timmermans is not sufficiently in line with the "traditional role of the Commission". PP perceived Commission statements as biased towards the integration of the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy into the CAP. In this context he asked Commissioner Wojciechowski to take the lead role in the future CAP negotiations.

PP stressed the importance of investments for future competitiveness. He expressed also his concerns about the lack of alternatives, when pesticides will be banned and/or use of pesticides will be reduced.

PP criticised that no impact assessment of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies has been carried out by the EU, as effects on farm income and competitiveness could be detrimental (as external assessments, such as the USDA study have shown).

On organic agriculture, PP questioned the viability of the 25% target for organic production and expressed his concerns about the future development of the organic market. He stressed that we can learn from organic farmers, but that we should not oversupply the market.

Commissioner Wojciechowski disagreed with PP's assessment concerning VP Timmermans role and stressed that there is only one Commission line. He highlighted the strong pressure by other lobby groups, e.g. environmental NGOs to withdraw CAP.

Commissioner Wojciechowski provided an overview of the status of the discussion on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. The aim to support long-term transformation. He underlined the important role of the Commission recommendations and the member states' CAP strategic plans with regard to the implementation of the Green Deal ambition. In this context, he stressed the importance of eco-schemes for which the Commission recently provided more clarity, including agro-forestry, precision agriculture and carbon farming as possible eco-schemes, while organic farming and forestry will continue to benefit from support under rural development.

He stressed that the recommendations have been received well by member states and expressed his confidence that the publication of the recommendations next week would ease some of PP's concerns. He explained that the umbrella communication would contain a list of indicators to be used as baseline and for measuring progress. He also stressed the value of having individual recommendations to all member states.

He expressed his support for the family farm model, recalling that the transition towards the Green Deal ambition offered many opportunities also for small and medium size-farmers, e.g. organic farming is an opportunity for smaller farmers with growth limitations.

With regard to the CAP, he referred to article 39 of the treaty which states that CAP funds should be used for the agricultural community (=farmers). Any attempt to divert these funds to other recipients would be against the treaty. He also referred to article 174 of the treaty on cohesion policy and underlined that rural area investments need to be funded by cohesion policy (and recovery funds) and not by the CAP.

Related to African Swine Fever, he stressed that CAP funds should be used to re-orient farming, but not to stop farming.

As a follow-up, PP invited the Commissioner to one of the forthcoming Copa-Cogeca meetings.

(e-signed)

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c.c.:

[Redacted list of recipients]