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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Common Declaration of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain on the need to develop plant proteins in European agriculture
- Information from the French delegation, on behalf of the Bulgarian, Croatian, Cyprus, Czech, French, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Luxembourg, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian and Spanish delegations

Delegations will find:

- In the Annex information from the French delegation on a common declaration by the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain on the need to develop plant proteins in European agriculture;
- In the Annex to the Annex the Common Declaration.

The abovementioned documents will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 21 September 2020.

Conseil Agriculture-Pêche du 21 septembre 2020**Demande de point divers porté par la France au nom des signataires****Présentation de la déclaration conjointe de la Bulgarie, Chypre, la Croatie, l'Espagne, la France, la Grèce, la Hongrie, l'Italie, la Lettonie, le Luxembourg, la Pologne, la République tchèque, la Roumanie, la Slovaquie et la Slovénie sur l'importance de développer la production de protéines végétales dans l'agriculture européenne**

La crise sanitaire a mis en lumière la nécessité d'améliorer la résilience du système alimentaire européen, et de réduire la dépendance de l'Union européenne aux protéines importées. Le développement des protéines végétales doit permettre de répondre aux objectifs ambitieux de la stratégie « de la ferme à la table » en réduisant les besoins en engrais, en assurant une meilleure complémentarité entre élevages et grandes cultures ainsi qu'en favorisant la diversification des régimes alimentaires pour la consommation humaine. Les États membres signataires soulignent les actions à mettre en œuvre pour atteindre ces objectifs, et en particulier l'importance des soutiens couplés volontaires pour encourager le développement des légumineuses. À ce titre, dans le cadre des discussions en cours sur la réforme de la politique agricole commune (PAC), les États membres signataires demandent des évolutions dans les critères d'attribution des aides couplées aux légumineuses et un élargissement de la liste des productions éligibles.

La déclaration proposée s'inscrit dans la continuité des recommandations du rapport de la Commission européenne publié le 22 novembre 2018 sur le développement des protéines végétales dans l'Union européenne et fait écho à d'autres déclarations portant sur les enjeux de développement des protéines et présentées au Conseil, s'agissant notamment de la déclaration du 17 juillet 2017 relative au développement du soja européen et de la déclaration du 28 janvier 2019 demandant un plan d'action européen en faveur des protéines végétales.

AGRIFISH Council, 21 September 2020

AOB point request made by France on behalf of the signatories

Presentation of the common declaration of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain on the need to develop plant proteins in European agriculture

The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the need to improve the resilience of the European food system, and to reduce the European Union's dependence on imported proteins. The development of plant proteins should make it possible to meet the ambitious objectives of the “farm to fork” strategy by reducing the need for fertilizers, ensuring better complementarity between livestock and arable crops and by encouraging a diversification of human diets. The above-mentioned Member States underline the importance of the actions to carry out so as to reach these objectives, especially voluntary coupled support to promote the development of legumes. So, as part of the ongoing discussions on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Member States are calling for adaptations in the criteria for the allocation of coupled supports for legumes and an extension of the list of eligible productions.

The proposed declaration refers to recommendations of the European Commission report published on November 22, 2018 on the development of plant proteins in the European Union and follows other declarations on the challenges of protein plants development and presented to the Council, in particular the European Soya Declaration (17 July 2017) and the common declaration on the need for an EU protein action plan (28 January 2019).

Common Declaration of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary,
Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain
on the need to develop plant proteins in European agriculture

At the Council of 28 January 2019, when the Commission presented its report of 22 November 2018 on the development of plant proteins in the European Union, many Member states called for the taking into account, in the future CAP, of the need to increase the areas under legumes and to encourage change in animal feeding practices, in particular towards greater feed autonomy at farm level.

Moreover, several Member States signed the "European Soy Declaration" on 17 July 2017, in order to promote the development of soy and legumes production with a view to increase farming, processing and usage of locally produced proteins for food and feed.

Since then, the Covid-19 pandemic has confirmed the strategic nature of the agriculture and food sector and the need to strengthen the resilience of the food system, and the 'Farm to fork' strategy includes quantified targets for fertiliser use in the European Union to combat climate change and preserve the environment.

Thus, Ministers in charge of agriculture of Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain,

1. **RECALL** that the development of plant protein production in the Union:
 - is an way of effectively addressing many of the environmental and climatic challenges that European agriculture is facing, which have been addressed in the ‘Farm to fork’ and ‘Biodiversity’ strategies,
 - contributes to compliance with the Paris climate agreement and to the reduction of tropical deforestation,

- can bring new economic opportunities to European farmers and breeders, by securing supplies to livestock farms and limiting their exposure to price volatility, but also by enabling them to meet growing consumer demand for plant proteins in food, thus giving them the means to respond to citizens' demand for production methods that are more environmentally friendly and animal welfare friendly;
2. **CONSIDER** that the transition of agricultural and food systems towards more sustainable models includes:
- the development of legumes that can reduce the need for fertilisers in crop rotations,
 - the promotion of livestock farming systems based on animal feed which makes greater use of the nutritional potential of grass and fodder legumes and encourage complementarities between livestock and arable crops in the territories,
 - the development of legume value chains for human consumption to accompany the diversification of diets;
3. **CONSIDER** that the development of plant protein production will be possible by the mobilization of research and innovation, the investments necessary for the emergence and strengthening of plant protein value chains, and by economic incentives for the development of cultivated areas;
4. **CONSIDER** that the whole range of tools of the future CAP should be used to encourage and support the development of the production of legumes¹ and that it should be possible to provide targeted support for the increase in cultivated areas through, among others, voluntary coupled income support, as recommended by the Commission in its report of 22 November 2018;

¹ Protein crops, soya and fodder legumes pure or mixed with grasses

5. **ARE ATTACHED** to ensuring that a mix between legumes and grasses is eligible for coupled income support, as the planting of grassland with such a mix is an important means of increasing the protein resource on livestock farms;
 6. **REQUEST** that flexibilities be provided to facilitate the implementation of coupled income support for legumes in line with the objectives set out in Recital 32 of the Commission's proposal for the CAP Strategic Plans Regulation; Member States should therefore not be required to demonstrate that the productions of protein crops, legumes , or a mix between legumes and grasses encounter difficulties in order to grant them coupled income support; Member states should also not be required to cap the supported areas.
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