

Informal Council – 31 May 2016

Speaking Points of Commissioner Phil Hogan

President Van Dam, Ministers

I would like to begin by thanking the Dutch Presidency for the hospitality over the past couple of days but, moreover, for the theme of this Informal Council and the paper which we have been discussing this morning.

I also want to acknowledge the paper circulated last week by the French delegation, which is also a useful contribution to the discussion about the future of the CAP.

I think that the format that the Presidency proposed for this morning's discussion enabled an open and frank exchange of views. I look forward to reflecting on the views and opinions expressed by Ministers.

The title of the Presidency paper "*Food of the Future – The Future of Food*" certainly gives food for thought. Of course there will be different views about the future direction that European agricultural policy will take and the Presidency's paper usefully identifies many of the factors that will influence that direction of travel.

Our discussion today is a very useful point of departure in terms of stimulating a debate about the future of the CAP. Over its lifetime, the policy has evolved and adapted to meet changing circumstances and that dynamic must be maintained as circumstances change and challenges continue to confront our industry.

Having participated in a very interesting discussion with some of you earlier, I'm not going to set out my views on the questions asked. I'm more interested to hear your views.

While today is certainly not a day to reach any conclusions, I would like to offer my observations on some of the issues raised by the Presidency.

Right now, the European dairy sector is facing a huge challenge. The CAP provides a range of tools designed to address crises such as we are experiencing. Having deployed all the tools available, the crisis in the dairy sector is still with us and more has to be done. That raises the question about whether the CAP provides the most appropriate means to address such a deep and long-lasting crisis or whether we need to have other instruments at our disposal.

Likewise, the EU is now committed to the full implementation of the COP21 Agreement, and indeed has other international commitments. In terms of the COP21, agriculture will have to play its part, consistent with the European Council conclusions of October 2014,

reflecting, as they do, *"the need to ensure coherence between the EU's food security and climate change objectives."*

When we have greater clarity about the contribution that agriculture will have to make to the Effort Sharing Decision and LULUCF, we will have to assess how the CAP can assist the sector to make that contribution while ensuring that we do not compromise the competitiveness of European agricultural production vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

We all know that while there is a need for increased production, agriculture has to become more sustainable and be more resource efficient. The CAP can help farmers to develop their knowledge and their tools that enable sustainable intensification while offering room for innovative ideas and solutions.

Let me be clear on this: with the pressure stemming from COP21, the sustainable development goals, the scarcity of our resources and the need to use our money better, the environmental and climate performance of agriculture will become a centre piece for the success of the CAP

Before concluding, I noted carefully the assertion in the Presidency paper that *"the process of a continued simplification of the CAP will have to be integrated into the future of the CAP."* Simplification is and will remain a guiding principle for me. As I explained at the last

Council, I am continuing with my simplification agenda and we will have the opportunity to discuss some proposals in relation to the simplification of greening at the June Council.

Finally, I would like to come back to the first question posed in the paper. In my view, the CAP already is a food policy, with the objective of supporting farmers to ensure that all European citizens have sufficient, high-quality food.

Indeed, as well as being a food policy, the CAP also contributes to so many other EU policy areas – climate, environment, trade, energy, research and innovation, competition etc.

As the Presidency paper says, *"the discussion on the future of the CAP has only just begun"* and it's a discussion that will continue and intensify. I agree too with the conclusion of the French paper, which says that *"a strong European agricultural policy is indispensable."* I have yet to come to a conclusion about my next steps, but today's discussion and the papers tabled will help to inform my decision in that regard.

I hope that the discussion started today can be continued under the incoming Slovakian Presidency and I certainly look forward to making my contribution to the future direction of the CAP in due course.

Thank you.