



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 21.2.2012
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to express its appreciation for the Opinion of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the future of the CAP after 2013 {COM(2010) 672 final}. The Commission adopted on 12 October a set of legislative proposals for the CAP in the period 2014-2020 on the basis of the Commission proposal of 29 June on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The proposals are now under examination by the Legislator.

In reply to the issues raised in your Opinion, the Commission would like to apologise for the undue delay in responding and to provide the following comments:

The Commission agrees with the Seimas on the importance of sustainable agriculture. The CAP should remain a strong common policy structured in two pillars, and should be geared towards greater resource efficiency in line with the Europe 2020 strategy.

In the area of direct payments, the aim is to enhance greening and targeting of support. The Commission shares the objective of a more equitable distribution of support, which will be pursued through a progressive convergence of payment levels during the next period. This approach should pave the way towards more equity between Member States and farmers, while taking into account differences in wage levels and input costs and allowing for the necessary adjustments.

While rural development is and should remain an integral part of the CAP as advocated by the Seimas, the Commission is proposing to improve coordination of all structural funds by putting the Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) under a Common Strategic Framework with the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF) so as to reflect a truly territorial approach.

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Finally, market instruments should continue to provide a safety net in times of crisis, while simplification and improvements are being explored. The budgetary framework proposed by the Commission also includes a new instrument for crises in the agricultural sector.

I hope that these clarifications address the issues raised in your Opinion, and I am looking forward to further developing the political dialogue with the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šeřčovič
Vice President*