

Common position of the Ministers of Agriculture of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia on key elements of the CAP reform

Meeting in Warsaw, November 15-16th, 2012

In the context of negotiations on the CAP reform for 2014-2020, the Ministers of Agriculture of **Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia**:

1. CONSIDER (with exception of the Czech Republic) that within the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework the expenditures on development focused policies related to Europe 2020 strategy should be maintained at least at the level proposed by the EC; UNDERLINE, in the context of objectives associated with food security and sustainable development, the importance of the CAP expenditure.

2. STRESS the need for an ambitious convergence of direct payments among Member States to achieve better consistency with the new CAP objectives. On the basis of the direct payment level in 2013 as reference year the highest degree of approaching of payments rates in Member States, i.e. towards the EU average level, is the preferable solution.

3. CONSIDER that Member States should have a possibility to further apply as a transitional scheme simple system of direct payments, the SAPS. This system is suitable for meeting objectives set by the EC for direct payments. Due to the complexity of entitlements based system, costs of implementation and administration of such system, non-familiarity of the system among farmers in Member States applying the SAPS, potential problems related to the functioning of the system in countries with unsettled land ownership issues – the possibility to apply the SAPS should be an alternative.

4. SUPPORT the idea to ensure equal conditions and sufficient flexibility for the implementation of the new system of direct payments, including the possibilities for differentiation of support level and setting percentage limit for coupled support, for all Member States, both within payments system based on entitlements and in case of continuing the SAPS. In this context, Member States currently applying the SAPS should have possibility to allocate up to 20% of their national direct payment envelopes for coupled support in sensitive sectors as well as in those sectors where complementary national direct payments are currently applied.

5. EMPHASISE, in the context of new challenges and conditions, the role of the second pillar of the CAP for achieving essential efficiency of this policy and for increasing global competitiveness of the EU agro-food sector.

6. SUPPORT application of the objective criteria for allocation of the second pillar resources among Member States; UNDERLINE at the same time that 2007-2013 past performance (with the exception of Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia) and gaps in economic development should be the key elements of these objective criteria.

7. ARE OF THE OPINION that specificity of the respective Member States should be taken into account when defining category of farms "green by definition"; AGREE at the same time, that farms with an area of up to 15 ha or one third of the average farm area in a Member State, depending which one of these values is higher, should be considered as respecting this criterion.

8. ASSESS that greening measures related to the EC proposal on the ecological focused areas (EFAs) affect competitiveness and level of agricultural production in a situation of forecasted increased global food demand; SUPPORT therefore the reduction of EFAs threshold and application of this requirement at Member State or regional and not at farm level.

9. CONSIDER that each Member State should have enough flexibility in deciding on expenditure within rural development programmes, adapting it to its specificity and needs, without limits related to minimum level of spending.