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NOTE

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STRONGER EUROPE V4
SLOVAK PRESIDENCY of the Visegrad Group

JOINT DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP AND BULGARIA, CROATIA AND ROMANIA

on the future Common Agricultural Policy post 2027

Bratislava, Slovakia, 6 October 2026

(1) We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, have gathered in Bratislava on 6 October 2026 to discuss the future Common Agricultural Policy in the context of the ongoing negotiations on the CAP framework and the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028–2034.

(2) We recognise the fundamental role of the Common Agricultural Policy in the EU's strategic autonomy and in ensuring food security, supporting farmers' incomes and the competitiveness of European agriculture, maintaining vibrant rural areas and strengthening the resilience of the agricultural and food sector.

(3) We note that European farmers are operating in an increasingly challenging environment characterised by market volatility, high production and energy costs, increasingly frequent adverse climatic events and natural disturbances, as well as geopolitical uncertainty. The future CAP must therefore provide farmers with stable, predictable and adequate support while enabling the Union to respond effectively to present and future challenges.

(4) We consider that the negotiations on the future CAP Regulation, the relevant agricultural provisions of the Regulation on National and Regional Partnership Plans and the elements of the Multiannual Financial Framework negotiating box under the competence of the European Council are inseparably linked. They must therefore be pursued in a coherent and coordinated manner.

Against this background, we, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania,

(5) **REAFFIRM** that the CAP must remain a strong and genuinely common European policy, based on common objectives and a clear common framework, while providing Member States with sufficient flexibility to reflect their different agricultural structures, territorial conditions and national needs. The future framework should ensure genuine simplification and reduce the administrative burden for farmers and Member States. Given the specific nature of the CAP, the Agriculture and Fisheries Council and the competent agricultural authorities must retain a central role in shaping and implementing the policy;

(6) In view of the current challenges facing agriculture, **CALL FOR** a substantial increase in the resources ring-fenced for the Common Agricultural Policy under the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028–2034, but not at the expense of other traditional policies, including Cohesion Policy. The financial allocation should take into account the effects of inflation, the growing number of objectives assigned to the CAP and the growing economic, climatic and geopolitical challenges faced by European farmers;

(7) **UNDERLINE** that the ring-fenced allocation must provide a stable and predictable basis for farmers' income support and other essential agricultural interventions throughout the programming period;

(8) **EMPHASISE** that the future CAP must ensure a fair distribution of support, while taking into account differences in support levels, agricultural structures and socio-economic and territorial conditions across Member States. Therefore, **CALL FOR** greater flexibility in setting the average amount of Degressive Area-Based Income Support (DABIS), allowing Member States to better reflect their specific needs and circumstances;

(9) **SUPPORT** better targeting of CAP income support. **STRESS**, however, that such targeting must not disproportionately disadvantage farmers and farms making a significant contribution to agricultural production, food security and social economical contribution to development of rural areas or disregard the specific structure of the agricultural sector in individual Member States, allowing also to direct support towards farmers organised in producer groups, producer organisations and agricultural cooperatives. For these reasons, **UNDERLINE** that degressivity and capping of DABIS should remain voluntary for Member States and must offer sufficient flexibility, for example by retaining the possibility to deduct labour costs, exclude young farmers and determining appropriate thresholds and percentages in accordance with their agricultural structures and national circumstances. Furthermore, **CALL FOR** maintaining redistributive payment as a possible alternative;

(10) **STRESS** that national co-financing requirements must be set at realistic and proportionate levels ensuring level playing field, including an upper limit for maximum national co-financing. Differences in the fiscal capacity of Member States must not lead to unequal conditions of support for European farmers, weakening the common character of the CAP or create distortions within the internal market;

(11) **CALL FOR** the application of the N+3 rule to CAP expenditure in order to allow sufficient time for the effective implementation of investments, facilitate the full use of available resources and prevent funds intended for agriculture and rural areas from being lost solely because of overly restrictive implementation deadlines;

(12) **WELCOME** the progress achieved in the negotiations on the future CAP Regulation. **STRESS**, however, that further work is necessary to ensure that the final framework is clear, coherent, simple and practically implementable;

(13) **RECOGNISE** that clear definitions of farmer, active farmer and eligible hectare are essential for ensuring that support reaches persons genuinely engaged in agricultural activity. Therefore, **EMPHASISE** that any adjustments should preserve legal certainty, avoid additional control and administrative requirements and ensure that genuine farmers are not excluded solely because agriculture does not constitute their principal economic activity;

(14) **STRESS** that environmental and climate measures must contribute effectively to the resilience and sustainability of European agriculture while remaining practical, accessible and economically viable for farmers. The future framework should support maintenance of already reached statuses, further adaptation and prevention and strengthen the transition towards more resilient farming systems without imposing disproportionate administrative burdens. In case of support for non-productive investments, all potential beneficiaries should be eligible given the need to implement landscape management measures on as wide a scale as possible;

(15) **CALL FOR** an exemption from the obligation to apply the DNSH principle for all CAP interventions;

(16) **HIGHLIGHT** the essential role of adequate coupled income support in maintaining agricultural production in vulnerable sectors and regions and in addressing specific economic, social and environmental difficulties. **CALL FOR** sufficient flexibility for Member States to target this support according to their needs and for a broader basis to be used when calculating the maximum financial allocation available for this intervention. Member States should not be obliged to repeat the whole justification process if the difficulties have not changed substantially in the given sectors. Furthermore **EMPHASISE** that farm transition actions must remain voluntary for Member States to implement, and that small farms should be exempted from farm stewardship requirements;

(17) **RECOGNISE** the continued importance of Transitional National Aid (TNA) as a vital instrument to support sensitive agricultural sectors and ensure socio-economic stability in specific rural regions, and **CALL FOR** its maintenance under the future CAP framework;

(18) **UNDERLINE** that agricultural production and food processing are closely interconnected. Investments in the processing and marketing of agricultural products listed in Annex I to the TFEU should remain eligible for support under the future framework, provided that this support is not financed from ring-fenced agricultural budget and does not reduce the ring-fenced resources available for farmers and agricultural interventions;

(19) **EMPHASISE** the need to ensure a smooth, predictable and timely transition to the new CAP framework, providing sufficient legal certainty for farmers and Member States. In this context, **CALL FOR** the possibility for Member States to submit, negotiate and approve the different chapters of their NRPP plan independently from each other.

Furthermore **CALL UPON** the Commission to make a proposal for transitional regulation to properly ensure the continuity of support and avoid disruptions during the first years of implementation.

(20) **AGREE** to continue close cooperation among the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania – also in the framework of the Friends of Cohesion Group - throughout the negotiations on the future CAP Regulation and the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028–2034, with the objective of contributing to a strong, adequately financed, flexible and simpler Common Agricultural Policy;

(21) **CALL UPON** the Presidency of the Council to take into account this declaration when revising the MFF Negotiating Box and the new compromise text of the CAP Regulation. This is a prerequisite to ensure that the final agreement delivers a genuinely common, adequately financed, flexible and predictable Common Agricultural Policy capable of safeguarding food security, strengthening the competitiveness and resilience of European agriculture and providing stable conditions for farmers across the Union beyond 2027.

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