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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
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Statement by Italy, supported by Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia

For a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy better aimed at addressing future challenges

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) represents the main instrument through which the European Union supports the competitiveness of the agricultural sector. Its common nature preserves the single market, ensuring essential income support for farmers, food security, environmental sustainability, and the protection of rural areas.

In this context, and in light of the geopolitical and socioeconomic scenarios that have been unfolding for several years, the original objectives of the CAP, as set out in Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome, remain fully relevant and must continue to guide the Union's future action. The outcomes of the EU Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture (2024) and the subsequent Strategic Vision for Agriculture and Food, presented last February, were generally welcomed by the sector, as they focused on attractiveness, competitiveness, fairness, and a long-term perspective, and advanced proposals for a CAP better targeted at supporting those farmers who truly need it.

Against this backdrop, the proposed regulations on the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRP), as well as those on the CAP 2028–2034 presented by the Commission on 16 July 2025, do not appear consistent with the direction set by the Union itself.

The idea of merging the CAP 2028–2034 into a single plan and fund that, from both a management and financial standpoint, would also encompass the Cohesion Policy, Fisheries, and even instruments for migration and security—although inspired by the goal of improving the effectiveness of EU spending—does not meet the needs expressed by Member States, nor does it achieve the simplification repeatedly called for in this Council and needed by farmers.

In this scenario, concentrating all policies in a single, heterogeneous programming framework would leave to each Member State's internal decisions the actual quantification of resources allocated to agriculture, with the concrete risk of renationalizing the CAP, increasing disparities in payment levels, and ultimately weakening the principle of fairness.

Furthermore, the lack of uniform governance systems and financial rules among the various components of the NRP would increase administrative burdens, fuel managerial uncertainty, and could consequently delay payments to beneficiaries—risking to foster disaffection among farmers towards the CAP and, by extension, towards the European Union.

From an operational and management standpoint, a single plan thus risks introducing additional complications rather than simplifying procedures. This is even more evident in regionalized countries, where national centralization of a single, cross-cutting programming framework covering multiple ambitions and competences would entail major organizational disruptions.

Added to this is dissatisfaction with the financial framework proposed for agriculture: the pre-allocated CAP budget (EUR 293.7 billion) appears inadequate given the challenges faced by the sector in a context marked by geopolitical shocks, market volatility, and climate change, in which adequate and stable resources to support income, investments and sustainable transition are essential.

Using the non-pre-allocated share to offset the insufficient ring-fencing of the CAP and to attempt to align total resources with those of the 2021–2027 programming period (EUR 378.5 billion) introduces uncertainty and allocative ambiguity, and risks triggering internal competition among national priorities. The constraint that places the main income support measures within the pre-allocated share risks compressing rural development measures, relegating them to the limited space of the undifferentiated quota. Yet it is precisely the rural development—introduced organically with Agenda 2000—that serves as the key tool to strengthen agricultural competitiveness through targeted strategic interventions, protect the environment and landscape, and promote the economic development and stewardship of rural areas.

The proposal is further weakened by the failure to adjust allocations for inflation, thereby reducing the real value of the CAP as a lever to support the profitability of agricultural enterprises and to sustain the European Agricultural Model's delivery of vital public goods.

We believe that, in choosing the methods for implementing the future agricultural strategy, the Commission should be guided by the pursuit of continuity with the current programming period and by progressive operational simplification, taking into account the adaptation efforts and investments already made by Member States with the introduction of the 2023–2027 Strategic Plans, and avoiding the recurrence of critical issues that have recently generated tensions in the agricultural sector.

With a constructive spirit, Italy with Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia, in line with the Council conclusions on "a farmer-focused post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy" of December 2024, consider it is necessary to profoundly revise the Commission's proposal for a single plan and fund, also taking into account the concerns already strongly expressed by farmers' community.

Italy and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia call on the Commission to maintain the CAP as a separate policy, based on two pillars, financed by a budget commensurate with the challenges ahead, ensuring evolutionary and improving continuity with the current programming period, within a stable and comprehensible regulatory framework for administrations and beneficiaries, and avoiding overlaps between support regimes and institutional reorganizations that risk adding further complexity.

With this approach, Italy and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia invite the Commission to commit to a position that defends a truly Common Agricultural Policy—one that provides resources consistent with the sector's expectations, simple rules, and effective operational tools, in the interest of European farmers, food security, and the resilience of our rural areas.

In conclusion, we must recognize that responding to current challenges requires concreteness and clarity in policy choices, and providing farmers with certainty. The Commission's pursuit of a perfect programming model, as reflected in the July proposals, is a cause for concern—not due to a lack of ambition on our part, but in light of past experience. We are still dealing with the implementation difficulties and costs of the CAP's New Delivery Model. Asking Member States to undertake yet another reform barely three years after the start of the 2023–2027 programming period appears, quite frankly, unthinkable.