



FRANS TIMMERMANS
Executive Vice-President

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Dear Dr Pe'er,

Thank you for your our inspiring discussion on 5 May as well as for your e-mail addressed to President von der Leyen and myself, on behalf of your co-authors, sharing a copy of your position paper with proposals on how the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) can address sustainability challenges.

We have to acknowledge the efforts already made in EU agriculture over the past decades - for example, in the area of climate change the EU's agricultural sector has bucked a strong global trend – cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% between 1990 and 2016 whereas emissions from agriculture worldwide climbed by 15% over the same period. Nevertheless, it is clear that major challenges remain. In this period following the presentation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the Commission's initiatives at the heart of the European Green Deal, is a good moment to look again at how we should respond to them. The CAP is not the only policy tool to help EU's farming and food sectors reflect the ambitions of the Green Deal: the Farm to Fork Strategy set out points for action under various policies including research policy, as the above-mentioned sectors must be armed with cutting-edge science to respond to the world's evolving needs. Following the food systems approach, the strategy address all actors and take action to ensure our transition to sustainable food systems. The CAP has, nevertheless, a major role to play. As elaborated in the Staff Working Document "Analysis of links between CAP reform and Green Deal" of 20 May, the Commission believes that its CAP reform proposal of 2018 contains a framework and individual elements that are very much in line with the push for greater overall sustainability set out in the European Green Deal and its associated strategies such as the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.

As you point out, the success of the approach set out in the Commission's proposal relies substantially on the quality of the CAP Strategic Plans, which Member States will draw up, taking advantage of significant flexibility afforded them. This is a deliberate departure from the past, in which approaches based more on detailed EU-level rules struggled to take adequate account of varying national, regional, and local circumstances and sometimes yielded sub-optimal results.

With a view to strengthening the strategic nature of the implementation of the future CAP and ensuring that the CAP Strategic Plans fully support the transition provided for in the European Green Deal, the Commission will organise a structured dialogue with the Member States already in the preparatory phase of their CAP Strategic Plans, before the formal submission of said plans. In this framework, the Commission, bringing in a range of relevant policy perspectives, key data and findings, will provide recommendations based on its analysis of the situation of each Member State in respect of agriculture and rural development as seen through the prism of the nine CAP specific objectives, and taking into account the European Green Deal.


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These recommendations will pay attention to effectiveness of CAP measures and consistency with other policy instruments implemented by the Member States, with a view to achieving the specific objectives of the CAP.

The issues raised in your position paper are essential elements in this respect and will feed into the Commission's analysis. And I would like to take this opportunity to recall that the Commission is relying on the support of the scientific community to continue to help it conduct its analysis on the effectiveness of the public policies it proposes, in particular the CAP.

I trust we will have other opportunities to exchange views during this process and I look forward to that.

Yours sincerely,



Frans Timmermans