

**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP
AND BULGARIA and ROMANIA**

**on the post 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework and
the Common Agricultural Policy**

Budapest, 26 March 2026

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria and Romania met in Budapest on the 26th of March 2026 upon the invitation of Hungary currently holding the V4 Presidency. We agreed on our common position and discussed our region's expectations towards the post 2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria and Romania

- (1) **UNDERLINE** the strategic importance of the EU agriculture sector - especially in the current geopolitical situation - and the essential role of the CAP in ensuring food security, stabilising the markets and strengthening food sovereignty in the EU.
- (2) **TAKE NOTE** the European Commission's proposals on the post 2027 MFF including the proposed rules for the future CAP.
- (3) **REGRET** that the European Commission did not take into account the Council Conclusions adopted by unanimity on the 9th of December 2024 on a farmer-focused post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy, which noted that dedicated and appropriate resources and instruments are needed for the CAP in order to efficiently respond to its multiple objectives and that a fair distribution of CAP support, in particular direct payments, among Member States is a sensitive issue and an adequate solution should be sought; urged to maintain a separate and independent CAP containing two pillars; and called for strong first pillar measures and stressed the need to continue with strong second pillar measures dedicated to rural development.
- (4) **REGRET** that the proposed ring-fenced budget for the CAP fails to maintain the current level, and **CONVINCED** that the competition for the non-ring-fenced funds of the budget would create unfair and unworthy rivalry between the CAP and the Cohesion Policy within our Member States. Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the new MFF, **CALL FOR** sufficient and adequate ring-fenced funding for the CAP by

keeping the current level in constant prices to be able to guarantee farmers' income security and to fulfil the sector's investment needs, strengthening the sector's competitiveness and resilience in times of increasing global competition, especially in light of recently concluded or signed free trade agreements such as the revised EU-Ukraine DCFTA and the EU-Mercosur agreement, also via creation of a dedicated compensation fund.

- (5) **HIGHLIGHT** that the proposed single fund and single plan approach can jeopardize the integrity and the common nature of the CAP, and the fulfillment of its Treaty-based objectives. Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the structure of the new MFF, **BELIEVE** that the proposals should be improved, and the rules of the CAP should be separated from other policies with clear, tailor-made implementation and approval rules. **EMPHASISE** that the separate and timely approval of the CAP-related plans is essential to guarantee the continuity of CAP payments to maintain farmers' income stability, market stability and food security.
- (6) **CALL UPON** the European Commission to enable the adjustment of direct payment envelopes for the 2027 claim year to ensure continuity as regards the level of support. The legislative work in this regard should be undertaken immediately.
- (7) **UNDERLINE** that agricultural ministers bear the political responsibility for the implementation of the CAP, therefore the Agriculture and Fisheries Council and the Special Committee on Agriculture as its preparatory body should negotiate and decide on the Council's position on the CAP legislative framework with the exception of those related financial issues, which are usually decided by the European Council in the framework of the MFF negotiations. The CAP-related plans should be approved by the European Commission based on negotiations between the Ministries of Agriculture and the Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, where the European Commission should assess the plans' compliance with the legally binding CAP-related provisions.
- (8) **CALL FOR** the transfer of all CAP-related articles of the NRPP regulation to the CAP and CMO legislation including the definition of farmer, which must reflect national specificities and ensure continuity with the current period.
- (9) Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the new MFF, **HIGHLIGHT** that the proposed national co-financing rates may cause inequalities among the Member States and farmers, and would further diminish the common nature of the CAP. **UNDERLINE** that making the current eco-schemes part of the nationally co-financed agri-

environmental and climate actions would also undermine the sector's contribution to the sustainability goals, therefore they should remain 100% EU-funded.

- (10) Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the new MFF, **INSIST ON** introducing the n+3 decommitment rule, as it would ensure the effective absorption of CAP funds and prevent the unjustified loss of EU financial resources.
- (11) **CONSIDER** the proposed rules for degressivity and capping of degressive area-based income support rather rigid, which do not take into account the different farm structures and specificities of the Member States, thereby causing considerable disadvantage for farmers in certain Member States. It would also have a negative effect on the income stability of family farms and young farmers, which runs counter to the generational renewal objectives. Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the new MFF, **CALL FOR** providing Member States with greater flexibility among others in the voluntary application of capping and degressivity; and in defining the minimum and maximum planned average aid per hectare for degressive area-based income support.
- (12) **UNDERLINE** that area- and animal-based interventions - such as the degressive area-based income support; coupled income support; payment for natural and other area specific constraints; support for disadvantages resulting from certain mandatory requirements; agri-environmental and climate actions and the support for small farmers – play an essential role in farmers' income stability and food security. These interventions are preconditions for sustainable and profitable farming and serve as collateral for long-term bank loans, which are used by many farmers to finance their investments. Therefore, **ARE CONVINCED**, that the uninterrupted continuation of these area- and animal-based interventions must be ensured, and cannot be endangered by late adoption of the plans or the application of different conditionalities not related to agriculture.
- (13) **WELCOME** that the proposed toolbox preserves the majority of the current CAP instruments, but **EXPRESS CONCERN** over the lack of a dedicated rural development pillar, which may undermine the goal of strengthening the viability of rural areas. **BELIEVE** that all current CAP rural development instruments - including land consolidation, advisory services, education, EIP and LEADER - should remain under the CAP.
- (14) **REGRET** that supporting investments in food processing and in irrigation infrastructure are excluded, and **ARE CONVINCED** that processing of Annex I products and irrigation should be eligible for support under the CAP rules regardless of whether the beneficiary is a farmer or not. **HIGHLIGHT** the importance of coupled income support for sectors and products encountering certain difficulties, and **CALL FOR** maintaining its budget at

least on the current level in constant prices, and accepting the already approved justifications for the next programming period.

- (15) WELCOME that the proposals put more emphasis on generational renewal by supporting young farmers and the transition of farms, but DISAGREE with taking away degressive area-based income support from farmers receiving retirement pension.
- (16) TAKE NOTE of the preparation of strategic and legally non-binding national recommendations by the European Commission in close dialogue with the Member States throughout the whole process and CALL FOR their timely delivery. STRESS that the recommendations shall reflect national realities, the size of Member States' CAP financial envelopes, priorities and specificities of the agricultural structures and respect the principle of subsidiarity.
- (17) WELCOME the proposed new green architecture, which through the newly introduced farm stewardship should result in more flexibility for farmers and national administrations. TAKE NOTE the proposal for agri-environmental and climate actions, which merges the current eco-schemes with agri-environment-climate commitments and the support for organic farming, and CALL FOR the possibility for Member States to continue with their current eco-schemes preserving their additional payment nature and the whole farm approach. EMPHASIZE that the proposed transition action plans would cause unnecessary administrative burden for farmers and public authorities, therefore they should be voluntary.
- (18) STRESS the importance of interventions in certain sectors which have proven their positive effects by providing adequate tools to enhance the position of the farmers in the food supply chain. Without prejudging the European Council's decision on the new MFF, CALL FOR sufficient and adequate funding and widespread type of interventions which take into consideration the specificities of the sectors concerned and the different needs of the producers of our Member States.
- (19) EMPHASIZE that transitional national aid is an important tool to avoid a sudden and substantial decrease in support in certain sectors and REQUEST maintaining it in the next programming period.
- (20) UNDERLINE that the more and more frequent market and natural crises require appropriate crisis- management instruments and financial tools, therefore WELCOME the proposed Unity Safety Net, but BELIEVE that besides market disturbances it should also be used for compensating the losses occurred due to natural disasters, adverse climate events and catastrophic events. HIGHLIGHT that national budgets can also play an

important role in addressing various crisis situations, therefore CALL UPON the Commission to increase the *de minimis* ceiling in agriculture.

- (21) NOTE that the proposed future Common Agricultural Policy does not make reference to the forthcoming EU enlargement.
- (22) WELCOME that the simplification package adopted in 2025 significantly decreased the administrative burden both on farmers and Member State authorities and CALL FOR maintaining its results for the next programming period. UNDERLINE the lessons learned from the ongoing implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans and EMPHASISE the need to simplify the performance framework, in particular for interventions implemented through the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS).
- (23) CALL UPON the current and upcoming Presidencies to take this declaration into consideration when negotiating the Council's position.
- (24) Taking into account the time-consuming negotiations and the time needed for the preparation and adoption of the CAP-related plans, URGE the European Commission to make a proposal for transitional rules by the end of 2026 at the latest to ensure legal certainty and predictability for farmers and national authorities.



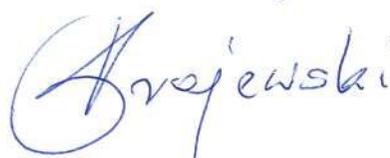
Ivan Hristanov
Bulgarian Minister for Agriculture and Food



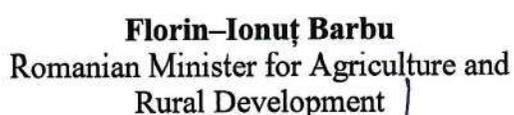
Martin Šebestýán
Czech Minister for Agriculture



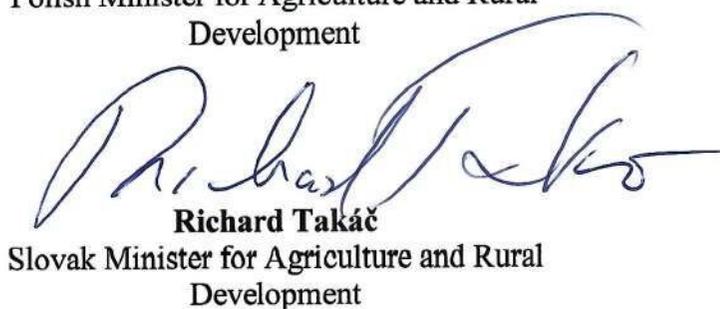
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Richard Takáč
Slovak Minister for Agriculture and Rural
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