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Dear Ms Luoni,

Thank you for your email of 1 September conveying – on behalf of a coalition of civil society organisations – your expectations for the assessment and the approval process of CAP Strategic Plans. Other addressees of your appeal, Executive Vice-President Timmermans, Vice-Presidents Šuica and Commissioners Kyriakides and Sinkevičius, asked me to reply also on their behalf.

Please rest assured that the Commission is well aware of the expectations of stakeholders regarding the process of preparation, assessment, approval and implementation of CAP Strategic Plans. We share many of the sentiments of your letter.

Indeed, with the June agreement on the reformed Common Agricultural Policy, the Union has reached another milestone and obtained an important tool to promote the transition to sustainable food systems. The next step is to ensure ambitious CAP Strategic Plans turning these aspirations into a reality. This will depend on the quality of the strategic plans and on their uptake. This in turn depends on the involvement and expertise of many actors – across government departments, with stakeholders and the public, within and outside the agricultural sector. Even more important is that the farming and rural community understand the choices made and stand behind these plans.

Several provisions of the agreed legislation reflect these considerations by requiring that Member States organise a transparent process of drawing up their CAP Strategic plans and that they establish a partnership with the competent regional and local authorities, economic and social partners as well as civil society. As a result of these provisions, extensive consultations are ongoing in Member States and (parts of) draft strategic plans are made available. They must report on the results of these consultations when submitting draft plans to the Commission. The Commission actively encourages Member States to explore all options available to facilitate this stakeholder involvement. Once adopted, Member State Managing Authorities must make publicity for their CAP Strategic Plan by informing beneficiaries and the general public.

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In contrast, the draft CAP Strategic Plans are a product of Member States and the forthcoming legislation does not oblige their disclosure.

The Commission is committed to transparency, also during the approval process. As such, the Commission strongly encourages Member States to publish the draft Strategic Plans. After all, they have been consulted with stakeholders. The Commission will ensure that the public stays well informed about the process and about the overall level of ambition of the CAP plans, also following up on its strategic 2020 recommendations for the CAP Strategic Plans and the underlying evidence. Firstly, by publishing on a dedicated website general information on the state of play of the process and an overall assessment of Member States' efforts based on the submitted and then approved CAP plans. Secondly, the Commission is ready to publish the observations letters containing the assessment of the proposed Plans. And finally, they will also be published in the report to the co-legislators that is due by the end of 2023.

I strongly encourage the members of the coalition to continue engaging in the consultation processes currently taking place at Member State level.

Yours sincerely,



Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI