

**Common Statement of Ministers of Agriculture
of the Visegrad Group + Bulgaria and Romania on key elements of the CAP reform**

Meeting in Rzeszów on 2-3 July 2012

In the context of negotiations on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy for 2014-2020 ministers of agriculture of **the V4 plus Bulgaria and Romania** would like to express their common position on the following issues.

1. The reform gives a possibility for changes of the CAP conducive to **more effective, fair, market and development-oriented policy** supporting competitive position of the EU agriculture and its sustainability.
2. In the context of discussion on **Multiannual Financial Framework**, consistency should be assured between EU objectives and tasks defined in the EC legislative proposals on CAP after 2013. Support should also be given to proposals resulting in faster convergence of direct payments between Member States, which should not negatively affect direct payments envelopes of any Member State with rates below average in 2013. Development gap of individual Member States together with their past performance (allocation for the period 2007-2013) should be the leading principles in defining objective allocation criteria for rural development support.
3. Draft legislative proposals require **more simplified, cost – effective and non-discriminatory** solutions, therefore:
 - it should be possible for a Member State to maintain single area payment scheme (SAPS) combined with solutions to sensitive sectors as a good, simple and well established alternative to the system based on the allocation of payment entitlements, however, in case of shift from SAPS to a new payment scheme based on entitlements there should be equal possibility for all Member States, to differentiate value of entitlements,
 - in order to target support to active farmers, no direct payments shall be granted to land used for non-agricultural activity (e.g. airfields, golf courses, football pitches),
 - due to variety of farm structures within the EU countries such new elements of the payment system as support to young farmers and small farmers scheme should be voluntary for the Member States,
 - capping of direct payments shall not affect competitiveness of EU farmers,
 - equal possibility to set the percentage limit for coupled support should be provided for all Member States to prevent distortion of competition.
4. **Requirements under greening** should be feasible both for farmers and administration and should create real added value for sustainability of agriculture, climate and biodiversity, therefore:
 - share of agricultural land devoted for ecological focused areas should be revised. Moreover, these areas could be controlled at regional or national as well as farm level,
 - non-compliance with greening obligations should result in sanctions related to greening component of payments only,

- list of “green by definition” exemptions should be broadened to involve all relevant situations in order to keep administrative costs at reasonable level ,
- an increase of the area triggering obligation for crop diversification to 20 ha is another factor important for simplification and control of administrative cost of the greening,
- obligation for maintaining permanent grassland should be applied at regional level, as its application at farm level will not bring additional environmental benefits,
- alternative solutions for enhancing environmental performance of the CAP should also be considered in the course of further debate.