Health check on the CAP

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The Council held a policy debate on the communication on the "health check" of the CAP since its 2003 reform, on the basis of a Presidency questionnaire, intending to discuss whether:

- the main developments since the reform of 2003/2004 and the main challenges to the CAP in the years ahead were correctly analysed in the Commission’s communication;
- the level of ambition and the scope of the adjustments broadly outlined in the Communication represent an adequate response to these challenges;
- the avenues for action identified by the Commission would better align the CAP with general societal expectations while preserving the European model of agriculture.

The Council noted the support of a large majority of delegations for the analysis made in the communication and the new challenges identified by the Commission.

With regard to the level of ambition and scope, Member States based their views on those expressed at November's Council meeting.

The crucial role of farmers to adapt to the environmental and global changes was unanimously recognised. Several delegations highlighted the strategic importance of agriculture with regard to food security, and the multifunctional aspects of the CAP. The different concerns and views expressed by the Member States will be examined on a technical and political level during the weeks to come, and will, once again, be submitted to Ministers in February 2008.

The Presidency's intention is for the Council to draw conclusions in March 2008, in order to enable the Commission to present legislative proposals in May, so that they can be examined in detail in the second half of 2008.

The Commission noted its agreement on the proposed timetable and stated that it would call for the timely development of relevant legislative proposals by its services, on the basis of these conclusions.