Simplification of the CAP

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The Council took note of the views expressed by ministers on the Simplification of the Common agricultural policy (CAP) based on a Commission staff working document.

Under the Swedish Presidency, which had made a priority of it, the topic has been addressed in different ways and from different angles, in particular by the Chief Veterinary Officers and by the Conference of the Paying Agencies, as well ad during a workshop organised in Brussels in September.

The Council had adopted conclusions on simplification of the CAP in May, inviting the Commission to examine and assess by the end of the year a list 39 concrete simplification suggestions submitted by 16 Member States.

Today, **several Member States have expressed satisfaction on the outcome of the Commission's assessment of the 39 suggestions for simplification**, and have in particular welcomed the Commission's commitment to prepare in the coming months a number of draft acts and proposals to follow up on a number of suggestions made, including alternative solutions.

Others, however, pointed out that the Commission's assessment did not lead to a positive follow-up on a number of suggestions made and would like to see those suggestions being reviewed through a political process.

Moreover, several delegations have indicated areas where they see scope for further simplification, and have asked the Commission in particular to take a more proportionate and risk-based approach to carrying out controls, conducting compliance audits and imposing financial corrections.

As regards the functioning of the Commission's Simplification Experts Group, a number of suggestions for improvement have been made. The Commissioner has noted those carefully.

For the near future, the Council would like to invite the Commission services to come forward with the draft acts and proposals indicated in the working document, and to continue working on the various ongoing simplification projects, in particular through the Simplification Experts Group.