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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Outcomes of the meeting of the Visegrad group countries plus Bulgaria, Austria, Romania and Slovenia (V4+4) on 26th August 2015, in České Budějovice
- Information from the Czech delegation

Delegations will find in Annex a note from the Visegrad group (plus Bulgaria, Austria, Romania and Slovenia) regarding the above-mentioned subject, to be presented under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 22 October 2015.

Outcomes of the meeting of the Visegrad group countries plus Bulgaria, Austria, Romania and Slovenia (V4+4) on 26th August 2015, in České Budějovice

As a current presiding country of the Visegrad group, the Czech Republic would like to inform about the meeting of the Visegrad group and Bulgaria, Austria, Romania and Slovenia (V4+4), that was held on 26 August 2015 in České Budějovice.

The debate was devoted to the agricultural markets development, particularly to the dairy sector. Delegations unanimously agreed that the EU must be able to provide a functional system and effective measures that will help both producers and the processors. Delegations also agreed to strengthen the School milk program and to solve the difficult situation in the mountain and disadvantaged areas by establishing of a new working group.

At the meeting, delegations discussed also other two topics, i.e. Frauds in the food chain and Best practices in land management.

Concerning frauds in the food chain, participants of the meeting agreed on a constant topicality of this issue and on the need for an operative solution. The basis is the cooperation and information exchange among Member States and their supervisory authorities, especially on the level of neighboring countries, and also other stakeholders. Fraudulent practices can be identified and stopped only by consistent and rapid information exchange. Delegations therefore unanimously supported the upcoming electronic information exchange system regarding frauds in the food chain (AACCS – Administrative Assistance and Cooperation System) that will accelerate and streamline the access to information. They also hope that it will become fully operational as soon as possible. It is very important that both supervisory authorities and consumers have all the necessary information in time in order the cooperation could deliver tangible positive results.

With regard to the best practices in land management, delegations confirmed the need for a comprehensive protection and soil management, not only for the purpose of maintaining its status, but also remedying existing problems and continuously improving of the soil quality. This should also reflect in better international competitiveness of farmers. In this context, the best practices in individual countries and the possibilities of making use of European funds were discussed. Given that this year has been declared by the UN as the Year of the soil, it is more than appropriate to currently pursue this issue. Discussions resulted also in very stimulating proposal to organize during the Czech presidency of the Visegrad group a seminar of expert bodies from V4+4 countries focused on the methods used and the particular experience with their applications.
