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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY

Directorate C - Renewables, Research and Innovation, Energy Efficiency
The Acting Director

Brussels, 13 MARS 2020
[redacted]ener.c.1(2020)1742198

NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF MS ANNE BUCHER
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DG SANTE

RE: REPLY FROM DG ENER

TO THE INTERSERVICE CONSULTATION LAUNCHED BY DG SANTE

Note signed by: Ms Anne Bucher
Dated: 03/03/2020
Reference: ISC/2020/01398

Deadline for reply: 13/03/2020

Title: Inter-service consultation – *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Farm to Fork Strategy for a Sustainable Food System*

☐ Agreement

☒ Favourable opinion subject to account being taken of the following comments

☐ Negative opinion (see attached comments)

Contact: [redacted]

Comments:

Thank you for consulting DG ENER on this document. We welcome the initiative to develop a Farm-to-Fork Strategy, as the EU food sector is a major consumer of fossil fuel energy. However, we are concerned that the current draft Strategy has virtually no references to energy consumption in the food system and the important contribution that energy efficiency and renewable energy can provide to reduce the sector GHG emissions and make it more sustainable and circular. We note that our earlier comments on previous draft unfortunately are not reflected in the current draft.

This cover note summarises our general comments and the Annex lists our text suggestions. We trust that DG SANTE will duly integrate them in the final document.

General comments:

According to JRC analysis, the amount of energy necessary to cultivate, process, pack and bring the food to European citizens' tables is equivalent to about a quarter of the EU's final energy consumption, with the vast majority coming from fossil fuels. Of this, agriculture (crop cultivation and animal rearing) accounts for nearly one-third while the remainder occurs "beyond the farm gates".

Reducing energy demand and increasing the use of renewable energy in the agriculture and food sectors is both possible and beneficial. In this context, we welcome the proposals for a reduction in chemical pesticides uses and for an increasing in organic farming. Energy, especially in the form of indirect energy used for fertilisers and pesticides or irrigation, remains a crucial input for cultivation success but huge improvements are possible.

In this respect, more greener and efficient fertiliser production, based on green hydrogen for instance, along with properly designed cultivation practices, can play a major role in decreasing indirect energy inputs to agriculture and the associated GHG emissions. We will further explore options for promoting green fertilisers in the upcoming Smart Sector Integration Strategy – which is one of the key energy-related initiatives announced in the Green Deal Communication.

The Strategy should encourage the EU agriculture sector and food industry to further deploy renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. For instance, thanks to investments in farm-based renewable technologies like biogas, farmers have the potential to not only become energy self-sufficient, but also to make a major contribution to EU energy production while reducing GHG emissions.

To this end, as new entry for the action plan, we propose to include energy efficiency and electrification in agriculture and forestry among topics in the calls under the future LIFE+ clean energy transition sub-programme.

Hans van Steen
[e-signed]

Annex: Suggested changes to the text in yellow

ANNEX – SUGGESTED CHANGES TO THE TEXT IN YELLOW

Section 1 'Need for action'

- Page 1 of the main body, 3rd paragraph: "Food systems are globally responsible for around a 21-37% of total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a similar share of energy end-use, have a…

- Page 2, first paragraph: "…to reduce dependency on pesticides, fertilisers, fossil fuels, and to…

- Page 3, first paragraph: "Research, innovation, digitalisation, electrification, technology, knowledge sharing and financial investments will provide solutions…"

Section 2 'The way forward'

- Page 3, first bullet point: (…) contributing to mitigate climate change, including reducing dependency of fossil fuels, and adapting to its impacts;

- Page 4, section 2.1, first paragraph: "To achieve sustainable food production, farmers, fisheries and aquaculture producers need to transform their production methods, making the best use of nature-based, technological and digital solutions to deliver better environmental results, increase climate resilience and reduce inputs (e.g. pesticides, fertilisers, and diesel)"

- Page 4, section 2.1, second paragraph: "It will also ensure that the Member States strategic plans adhere to a concerted and ambitious approach in line with the Farm to Fork Strategy, including on climate, energy, and environment, pesticides, fertilisers, antibiotics and organics"

- Page 4, section 2.1, third paragraph: "Other promising examples include the production of green fertilizers and of biogas, including biomethane, from agriculture waste and residues, such as manures, and non-food crops. The Commission will explore options for promoting green fertilisers and the integration of biogas into the gas network in the context of the upcoming Smart Sector Integration Strategy."

- Page 6, section 2, entirely new paragraph after the paragraph on use of chemical pesticides: "The **direct energy use of the European agriculture and forestry sectors** amounts to some 3% of the total EU final energy consumption. More than half is based on fossil oil and petroleum products, much of which is used to fuel mobile machinery. Electrification and hybridisation is already emerging as a solution to increase energy efficiency and renewable energy use. **The Commission will take action to speed-up market adoption of this and other energy efficiency solutions in the agriculture and food sectors under the clean energy transition sub-programme of the future LIFE Programme.**

- The low tax rates and exemptions on fuel often used in agriculture are not helpful in this respect and mean that some of the lowest cost opportunities to reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption are being forgone. While the review of the Energy Taxation

Directive will be an opportunity to consider this in more detail, under upcoming European Semester the Commission will encourage Member States to already consider this issue as part of broader green, fiscal reforms, combined with revenue recycling to farmers to support a just transition, where appropriate. “

- Annex – Action plan: New entry under the ‘Ensure sustainable food production’: “- Include energy efficiency and electrification in agriculture and food sectors among topics in the calls under the clean energy transition sub-programme of the future LIFE Programme”.