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European
Landowners'
Organization

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The European Landowners' Organization's reaction to the report from the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture

Announced by the President of the European Commission in her State of the Union Address on September 13th 2023 and launched in January 2024, the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture brought together 29 individuals in key positions within the European agri-food sector, civil society and academia to reach a common understanding on the further development of a core area of European life and economy in a new format of political discourse. The members of the Strategic Dialogue strived for a conceptual consensus that opens new perspectives for farming and food on the continent.

Today, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, announced that the strategic dialogue reached an agreement on how the European Union should further organise its agriculture and food-related policies. It does not mean the conclusion of all debates and the answer to all questions and trade-off decisions. Still, it is an important step toward an economically profitable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible agricultural and food system in the European Union.

ELO welcomes the acknowledgement of the specificities of the agri-food sector and its increasing challenges. While not providing the solutions, it presents some steps in the right direction, namely the attempt to deal with the weak position of farmers in the value chain. Still, this is just a small part of the correction of market failures in both private and public goods.

ELO welcomes the steps proposed for better preserving and managing farmland, by acknowledging the impacts climate change and land abandonment have on the quality and quantity of the remaining land, and the difficulties in accessing financing and land mobility constraints for generational renewal. Still, it is important to acknowledge that land remains of national competence.

Other elements on which the experts participating in the strategic dialogue found agreement include: strengthening farmers' position in the food value chain, deploying a new approach to deliver on sustainability, promoting sustainability and competitiveness in trade policy, enhancing sustainable

farming practices, reducing GHG emissions in agriculture, creating pathways for sustainable animal farming in the EU, taking further action to better preserve and manage farmland and promoting water-resilient agriculture, promoting robust risk and crisis management, building an attractive and diverse sector, and giving better access to knowledge and innovation

All the measures and objectives proposed are part of a broader governance change, which needs to be fostered with a new culture of cooperation, trust and multistakeholder participation among the actors and within institutions. This exercise was a step in that direction, but not without its difficulties. The new culture of engagement must ensure practicability and consistency between the different policy areas, overcome silo-thinking and increase trust overall. ELO hopes that this close engagement will continue in the reflection of the new Vision for EU Agriculture and Food, coming in the first 100 days of the new mandate of Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and in its following steps.

The final version of the agreed text can be found [here](#).

The coverage of the press conference of President Ursula von der Leyen can be found [here](#).

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About the European Landowners' Organization (ELO)

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO) is a leading voice representing the interests of landowners, rural entrepreneurs, and rural land managers in Europe. ELO promotes sustainable land management practices, fosters innovation, and advocates for the recognition of landowners' crucial role in shaping Europe's landscapes and rural areas.

