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[8 October 2018: Commission to Host Annual High-Level Meeting with Religious Leaders](#)

The news:

On Monday 8 October, the First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans** will host the annual high-level meeting “The Future of Europe: addressing challenges through concrete actions” with representatives from religious organisations from across Europe. Building on the [discussion started last year](#), the leaders will look into concrete actions that can be taken to address challenges currently facing Europe. They will discuss in particular challenges relating to migration, social integration and the sustainability of our way of life, which, in view of the upcoming European Parliament elections, should be treated as priority matters. The leaders will review how the Union collectively dealt with those issues in the past years, recommending tangible actions for the future.

The background:

High-level meetings and discussions are held regularly between the European Commission and churches and religious, philosophical and non-confessional organisations. The meetings were launched by the Commission in 2009 when such dialogue was enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty (Art 17 TFEU). The dialogue is now under the responsibility of First Vice-President Timmermans.

The high-level meeting on 8 October will be the 14th meeting with religious leaders organised by the Commission. The Commission held its annual meeting with non-confessional organisations on 18 June (full press release available [here](#)).

The event:

The high-level meeting of First Vice-President Timmermans and religious leaders will take place on 8 October at 10.00. Bilateral interviews may be possible, and interested journalists are invited to get in touch with the Commission’s Spokespersons Service.

The sources:

More information about the dialogue with churches, religious associations or

communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations is available [here](#).

[Press Release](#) – Future of Europe: Commission brings together religious leaders to discuss a value-based and effective Union

[Press Release](#) – Artificial Intelligence: Commission discusses ethical and social impact with philosophical and non-confessional organisations

Joint statement by President Tusk and NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg on the consultative referendum in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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Better protection for farmers against unfair trading practices: Council agrees its negotiating position

On 1 October 2018, EU member states meeting in the Special Committee on

Agriculture (SCA) reached agreement on the Council's negotiating position on the Commission's proposal for fairer **relations in the agri-food sector between small farmers and processors, and their larger trading partners.**

The SCA also asked the presidency to **start negotiations** with the European Parliament as soon as the Parliament is ready.

This legislation will put an end to practices such as late payments and retroactive changes to contracts. Farmers will soon have more effective ways of defending themselves from unilateral abuses by large operators. We want a fair agri-food system that rewards farmers for quality, and guarantees them a fair standard of living.

Elisabeth Koestinger, Austrian federal minister of agriculture, forestry, environment and water management and president of the Council

The **distribution of value** in the food chain has often proved to be **unfair in the past**, with farmers only getting a small share of the price paid by consumers for food in the supermarket. As agricultural producers are largely small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), the ability of big operators to use their much larger bargaining power to impose unfair trading practices (UTPs), has been a major factor in this phenomenon.

The Council position builds on the Commission's proposal for a directive which will create a common European framework granting a **minimum level of protection for farmers** against the most obvious UTPs, such as **late payments** for perishable food products, **last minute order cancellations, unilateral and retroactive changes to contracts**, and obligations on the supplier to pay for **wasted products**.

While the Council position **maintains the scope** of the Commission proposal (certain UTPs which occur in relation to the sale of products by a supplier that is an SME to a buyer that is not an SME) it further improves it by:

- including **agricultural products other than food**
- making it **possible** for suppliers to **lodge a complaint in their own member state** and
- clarifying that member states have the possibility of **maintaining or introducing rules** against UTPs that are **stricter** than those at European level.

Next steps

Negotiations with the European Parliament will start as soon as the Parliament has agreed its stance.

A qualified majority is needed for adoption by the Council, in agreement with the European Parliament.

[ESAs highlight the relevance of legislative changes for the Key Information Document for PRIIPs](#)

Additionally, to support such changes, as well as to address key issues that have arisen from the practical application of the Key Information Document (KID) for Packaged Retail and Insurance-based Investment Products (PRIIPs), the ESAs intend to propose targeted amendments to the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation.

Taking into account the time needed for the co-legislators to scrutinise any amendments to the Delegated Regulation, the ESAs intend to submit proposals to the European Commission in the first quarter of 2019. As part of this process, the ESAs intend to launch a short public consultation during the fourth quarter of this year.

Background

The ESAs' letter responds to two letters received from the European Commission in [July](#) and [August](#) stating a deferral of the review of the PRIIPs Regulation and requesting guidance from the ESAs regarding the information to be disclosed for investment funds.

The KID for PRIIPs is a mandatory, three-page A4 information document to be provided to consumers before purchasing a PRIIP. PRIIPs include for example funds, structured products, unit-linked and with-profits life insurance contracts, and structured deposits.

The PRIIPs Regulation defines the **main rules and principles** for KIDs. It is supplemented by a Delegated Regulation specifying the presentation and contents of the KID, which is based on Regulatory Technical Standards that the ESAs were mandated to develop.