1. The new rules on value-added tax (VAT) rates, recently adopted and in force since 6 April 2022, allow Greece to apply rates up to 30% lower than the corresponding rates applied in mainland Greece, in the departments of Lesbos, Chios, Samos, the Dodecanese and the Cyclades, and on the islands of Thassos, the Northern Sporades, Samothrace and Skiros. Crete is however not included in this list and the Commission currently has no plans for further legislative initiatives regarding VAT rates.

2. The scheme of specific measures in the agricultural sector for the smaller Aegean islands\(^1\) was established to remedy the difficulties caused by their particular geographical situation. Insularity and distance from markets result in constraints on their economic operators and producers. In certain cases, operators and producers suffer from ‘double insularity’, i.e. supplies can only be brought by way of other islands. The problems are accentuated by the islands’ small size. The situation of Crete and Evia is quite different. Therefore, it is not possible to extend the scheme to those two islands. As to the POSEI scheme\(^2\), it concerns only the outermost regions recognised by Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

3. The Greek rural development programme (RDP) for the period 2014-2022\(^3\) supports the establishment of producers groups and organisations. The amount allocated for such actions in the most recent version of the RDP is EUR 25 million. We encourage island producers to use these opportunities.

\(^1\) Regulation (EU) No 229/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in favour of the smaller Aegean islands.

\(^2\) The programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity (POSEI) established in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union.

\(^3\) Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).