



Brussels, 25 June 2010

## ***Background<sup>1</sup>***

### ***AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES COUNCIL***

**Luxembourg, 29 June 2010**

*The Council meeting will cover Agriculture and Fisheries subjects and start on Tuesday 29 June at 10.00, chaired by Ms Elena ESPINOSA, minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Spain.*

*Concerning Fisheries, ministers will hold an exchange of views on the **Commission's Communication on fishing opportunities for 2011 and on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.***

*During lunch, ministers will have a discussion on **the reform of the Common Market Organisation for fishery and aquaculture products.***

*As regards Agriculture, ministers will exchange their views on the **simplification of agriculture and veterinary legislation.***

*Secondly, proposals for decisions authorizing the use of six **genetically modified maize varieties** in food and feed will be presented to the Council for adoption.*

*The Council conclusions on the **International competitiveness of the European agri-food model** are in the A items foreseen to be adopted.*

*A first press conference on Fisheries will take place before lunch (+/-13h00). A second press conference on Agriculture will be organised after the meeting (+/-18h30).*

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

## **FISHERIES**

### **Fishing opportunities for 2011**

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the basis of the Commission's communication on fishing opportunities for 2011 ([9888/10](#); [10913/10](#)).

The communication sets out the general approach to be taken by the Commission in formulating its proposals for fishing opportunities in 2011. This should constitute a basis for consultation with stakeholders and Member States. The document outlines the state of the stocks, the need to reduce capacity, the Commission's continued commitment to long-term plans and possible new rules governing the setting of some total allowable catches (TAC).

The objective of some measures proposed in this document is to reach maximum sustainable yield (MSY) targets agreed in Johannesburg by 2015. For many important stocks which are now under long-term plans, these plans should be implemented. In addition, for stocks for which no long-term plans have yet been proposed, it would be appropriate to move towards MSY by specific measures detailed in the communication.

The Presidency considers important at this time to have an exchange of views at Council on this Communication in order to prepare the annual setting of the TACs and the allocation of quotas scheduled to be decided in the last quarter of the year.

### **Reform of the common fisheries policy**

Ministers will hold an exchange of views on the reform of the common fisheries policy (CFP) following a presentation by Commissioner Damanaki on the available policy options for this reform.

The results of the large consultation process initiated on the reform will be followed by legislative proposals to be addressed to the Council and the European Parliament early in 2011.

In preparation of the reform of the CFP, the Commission issued a Green Paper on April 2009 ([8977/09](#)). This document analysed the outcome of the last CFP reform in 2002 and identified structural failings and main issues to be addressed in the future. It addresses issues such as: differentiated management regimes for industrial and small-scale coastal fleets, management tools, relative stability, trade and market, integration of the CFP in a broader maritime policy context, knowledge base of the policy, structural policy and public funding, the external dimension of the CFP and aquaculture.

On 25 May 2009, at a preliminary exchange of views, ministers identified a number of elements to be taken into account in subsequent discussions on the CFP reform, including:

- better adaptation of fleet capacity to fish stocks availability,
- discards reduction through development of more selective fishing gear,
- devolution of decision-making to regional/national levels,
- responsible behaviour all along the fishery chain,
- improved efficiency of controls,
- differentiated approach for industrial and coastal / small-scale fleets,
- revision of funding rules, and
- promotion of aquaculture development.

Based on the Green Paper, the Commission undertook a broad consultation of all stakeholders in 2009. The outcome of the contributions received by 31 December 2009 was summarised by the Commission in a synthesis report in April 2010 exploring the different policy options to be examined at a later stage.

A major conference was organised in La Coruña, under the auspices of the Presidency on 2-3 May 2010 and the discussions evolved around three issues: governance, access and management of resources, and small scale fisheries.

The outcome of the conference as well as the synthesis report of the written contributions to the Green Paper were considered at an informal meeting of Fisheries Ministers in Vigo on 4-5 May which highlighted:

- the interest in a more regional focus of the CFP, but the need for clarity on the extent to which such a decentralisation is in line with the possibilities provided by the new Treaty;
- the possibility of having a positive discrimination of small-scale and coastal fisheries but diverging views on how to establish an EU-wide definition of this part of the sector;
- the identification of measures to reduce discards;
- the need to use of the “toolkit” of management measures (TAC, effort, technical measures) in a more appropriate way that is adapted to each fishery;
- the strong reluctance to embrace the introduction of individual tradable rights (ITR) at EU level.

The Commission is expected to carry-out in the second half of 2010, an impact assessment to examine the policy options put in evidence in the framework of the consultation process. Four legislative proposals - one amending the basic regulation 2371/2002, a revision of the common market organisation, a revision of the regulation on technical measures and a new regulation on financing - are scheduled to be presented by the Commission in the first semester 2011.

The CFP was established in 1983 and has since then been reviewed every ten years. Last revision was in 2002 and the next is scheduled for 2012 at the latest.

See also: <http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/>

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Simplification of agriculture legislation**

Ministers will hold an exchange of views on the simplification of agriculture legislation following a presentation by the Commissioners in charge of Agriculture and Rural Development and Health and Consumer Policy, Dacian Cioloș and John Dalli, of the state of the play of the ongoing process in their respective area of responsibility ([11126/10](#)).

Simplification of EU legislation, and in particular of agricultural legislation, including the animal and plant health field, has been identified by the Council, the Commission and the European Parliament as a key issue in diminishing the administrative burden placed on European farmers, streamlining rules and regulations and improving the quality of the legislation adopted.

The Commission launched in 2007 an overall action programme for reducing administrative burden identifying some possible actions in the area of the Common Agricultural Policy and food safety and animal health. In addition, a working group of experts from member states set up by the Commission in February 2006, explored ways to simplify agricultural legislation at a technical level, to facilitate the exchange of views and best practices among member states and, where appropriate, to provide recommendations on simplification proposals. At its plenary of 18 May 2010, the European Parliament adopted also a resolution on the simplification of the CAP. This resolution contains a number of suggestions for simplification in various fields of the CAP.

At the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 April 2009, a number of delegations presented a list of 39 proposals aimed at simplifying various aspects of EU agricultural legislation. In response, a Commission staff working document was issued assessing the suggestions and finally keeping 25 of them. The follow-up prepared by the Commission indicates that several recommendations have been already implemented, in particular on direct payments and eco-conditionality; the implementation of many other simplification measures should be effective for the autumn 2010 and will play a role in the proposals for the reform of the CAP after 2013 (promotion of the agricultural products, rural development, etc.).

## **Situation on the dairy market**

The Commission will present a quarterly report of the situation on the dairy market. The opening, beginning of June 2010, of the sales of intervention stocks of butter and skimmed milk powder indicate that the market continued to recover since the last presentation at Council of the quarterly report in March 2010

As a reaction to the crisis in the dairy sector, the Commission committed in May 2009 to report every three months on the situation in the dairy market. The High Level Group established by the Commission in October has published its report and recommended several measures going from the enhancement of contractual relations between milk producers and milk processors to the improvement of producer organisation; instruments to reduce market volatility and innovation and research programmes are also part of the recommendations.

## **Authorisation of six genetically modified maize varieties for food and feed**

Proposals for decisions authorizing the use of six genetically modified maize varieties in food and feed will be presented to the Council for adoption.

The varieties concerned are:

- Maize 1507x59122 from Dow AgroScience ([10499/10](#))
- Maize 59122x1507xNK603 from Pioneer ([10500/10](#))
- Maize MON88017xMON810 from Monsanto ([10501/10](#))
- Maize MON89034xNK603 from Monsanto ([10502/10](#))
- Maize Bt 11 from Syngenta ([10503/10](#))
- Maize Bt 11 x GA 21 from Syngenta ([10505/10](#))

These proposals (five new authorisations requests and one authorisation renewal for maize Bt 11) concern only the use of the respective GMO's in food and feed, excluding cultivation.

Following the submission of initial applications for authorising these genetically modified varieties, as provided for by regulation 1829/2003, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was initially consulted. EFSA issued favourable opinions, concluding that it is unlikely that marketing these plants would have any adverse effect on human or animal health or on the environment. On this basis, the European Commission drew up proposals for authorising these varieties.

At its meetings on 9 February and 19 April 2010, the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health was unable to gather the qualified majority necessary to deliver an opinion in favour or against the authorisation measures proposed by the Commission. In the absence of an opinion it is to the Council to act on the Commission proposals within a three month period.

If a qualified majority for or against the authorisation of each of these varieties is not found in the Council, the proposals would then go back to the Commission which would have to take the decision about the authorisations.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Fisheries**

#### ***European Fisheries Fund***

The Council will be briefed by the Commission on delays in the implementation of the European Fisheries Fund by Member States ([11241/10](#)).

#### ***Mackerel management negotiations with Iceland and Faroe Islands:***

At the request of the Irish delegation, Ministers will be informed of the current state of play and possible options on the negotiations on mackerel management with Iceland and Faroe Islands ([11428/10](#))

### **Agriculture**

#### ***Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate change***

The Dutch delegation will inform the Council about the organisation of a conference involving several stakeholders on Agriculture, Food security and Climate change in The Hague from 31 October to 5 November 2010 ([10887/10](#)).

#### ***Floods in Poland***

The Polish delegation will provide information to the ministers on the consequences of floods for crops and farm animals in Poland ([11405/10](#)).

#### ***Trade barriers from Argentina on Greek canned peaches***

The Council will be briefed by the Greek delegation on trade barriers imposed by Argentina to the imports of Greek canned peaches ([11496/10](#)).

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