



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 6 July 2010 (07.07)
(OR. en,fr,nl)**

11893/10

**AGRI 258
PECHE 161**

NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

Subject: Belgian Presidency work programme
– Agriculture and fisheries

Delegations will find attached the work programme drawn up by the Belgian Presidency for the agriculture and fisheries sectors, to be presented to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 12 July 2010.

Belgian Presidency programme for AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES

Following the transition period upon entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and induction of the new Commission and European Parliament, legislative business will pick up again during the Belgian Presidency. The Presidency means to put the Lisbon Treaty fully into practice, particularly as regards general application of the procedure for codecision with the European Parliament on all agricultural policy legislation.

Common agricultural policy

Two important items will call for most attention from the Belgian Presidency over the next six months.

1. Future of the common agricultural policy after 2013

The objectives of the CAP were reaffirmed by the Lisbon Treaty and so remain entirely relevant: ensuring stable food supplies for Europe's 500 million citizens, maintaining sustainable agricultural activity throughout the territory, while protecting the environment and the countryside, providing quality food and contributing to sustainable development. The CAP represents value added by the European Union and plays a key part in European integration.

On 25 and 26 March 2010 the European Council recognised that a sustainable, competitive and productive agricultural sector can make an important contribution to the EU 2020 strategy. On 29 March 2010 the Agriculture Council highlighted the CAP's contribution to achieving the objectives and priorities of the EU 2020 strategy and the scope for increasing that contribution in future.

During the Belgian Presidency, work on the future of the CAP after 2013 will enter a new stage. Discussions on strategic issues for the future of the CAP, already begun during previous presidencies, will from now on be stepped up a gear:

- on the basis of the outcome of the public consultation held by the Commission, to be assessed at a two-day conference in Brussels on 19 and 20 July 2010;
- at an informal Agriculture Council meeting in La Hulpe on 21 September 2010, where the future of the CAP will again form the main topic for discussion, with the Belgian Presidency building on the results to emerge from the conference;
- on the basis of a communication on the future of the CAP after 2013, which is to be presented by the Commission at the November Council meeting and on which the Belgian Presidency will hold a policy debate at the December Council meeting.

2. Dairy sector

The market situation has improved significantly since the serious crisis in 2009, but still remains fragile. The Commission instructed a high-level group of experts to consider the medium and long-term prospects for the dairy sector. The Belgian Presidency would like to have the Council take due account of the high-level group's work and its report, adopted on 15 June 2010.

Thus, at its meeting on 12 July 2010, following a presentation by the Commission, the Council will hold an initial exchange of views on that report and on the seven recommendations made by the high-level group of experts on milk.

The Presidency intends to return to the matter at the Council meeting on 27 September 2010, with the aim of arriving at a consensus on a number of specific policy points for the future.

At the December Council meeting, the Commission will then present a package of specific legislative proposals, together with a first report on the soft-landing scenario for milk quotas, as agreed at the time of the health-check decisions.

The Council will hold an initial exchange of views on this at that December meeting, after which the matter will be handed over to the Hungarian Presidency.

Monitoring of the dairy market will also continue to be an important item during the Belgian Presidency, with special attention being paid to the Commission's quarterly reports on the state of that market.

Apart from those two main items, the Belgian Presidency will open a debate on a review of **Europe's agricultural product quality policy**. A legislative initiative on this is expected from the Commission towards the end of 2010.

Depending on the Commission's timing, the Belgian Presidency will also be setting in hand discussion of **a number of other agricultural items** on which Commission initiatives are expected in the second half of 2010:

- distribution of foodstuffs to the **least well off**;
- the Commission report on the **outermost regions**;
- proposals to **adapt** existing agricultural legislation to the **Lisbon Treaty** and to **simplify** agricultural legislation (rural development and direct support);
- the Commission report on the **farm advisory system (FAS)**.

Lastly, the Belgian Presidency will be keeping a close watch on developments in WTO/DDA and bilateral negotiations and their possible impact on agriculture.

Plant health, veterinary and food security issues

Globalisation and climate change have profoundly altered the context in which European farmers carry on their activities. Trade developments and climate change are major health risk factors in both animal and plant production. The new context may favour the emergence of diseases hitherto unknown in our regions and calls for effective preventive policies at an affordable cost for farmers.

At the same time, climate change also affects livestock feed costs. Indeed, harvest failures due to climate hazards throughout the world may cause animal feed prices to shoot up in Europe, a region highly dependent on raw material imports, notably because of its protein shortage.

In view of this, the Belgian Presidency proposes to encourage the framing of coherent food security policies by focusing on three specific issues to be discussed extensively during this Presidency, namely:

- **TSE Road Map II:** the Commission proposal will be assessed in detail with a view to altering a number of mad cow disease and scrapie eradication measures without detracting from the high level of public health guarantees. Conclusions will be adopted which endeavour to reflect Member States' views accurately;
- **GMO framework:** like the Environment Council, the Agriculture Council will be following up developments in connection with genetically modified organisms;
- **animal health strategy funding:** discussion of the various schemes and options ought to provide material for the Commission's final proposal concerning animal health.

Further activities will revolve around:

- the evaluation report on the operation of the plant health regime;
- discussion of how to bring Article 13 of the TFEU into effect in the context of broader application of animal welfare;
- continuation of negotiations with third countries on health and plant health requirements to facilitate imports and exports of agricultural products.

Forestry

The Presidency will formalise the agreement on the dossier on combating illegal logging at the earliest opportunity, so that expectations can be met without any waste of time.

Fisheries

Fisheries items will be entered on the Council agendas for October, November and December.

1. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

No legislative CFP reform proposals will be tabled in the second half of 2010. They are planned for the spring of 2011. However, the European Commission (COM) will organise a Conference on reform on 16 November 2010 and the Belgian Presidency will stage an international symposium on "Improved Science and Fisheries Partnership Agreements as Policy Drivers" on 9 and 10 November 2010 to discuss improved cooperation between scientists and fishermen in a joint quest for sustainable fisheries. Afterwards, the symposium's findings will be put to Ministers at the November Fisheries Council luncheon.

2. 2011 fishing opportunities

The TACs and quotas for 2011 will take up a large part of the autumn, as follows:

- TACs and quotas for the Baltic Sea: proposal mid-September, political agreement at the October Council;
- TACs and quotas for deep-sea stocks in 2011 and 2012: proposal end of September, political agreement at the November Council;
- TACs and quotas for the Black Sea: proposal in November, political agreement at the December Council;
- general TAC and quota Regulation: proposal end of October, political agreement at the December Council.

3. Technical measures

Extension of the transitional Regulation which was agreed after the November 2009 Council failed to reach agreement on new technical measures. The technical measures, which formed part of the annual TAC and quota Regulation prior to the Treaty of Lisbon, were moved to a transitional Regulation valid until 30 June 2011 following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (which brought them under the co-decision procedure). However, since it has meanwhile been decided to revise the technical measures as part of the CFP reform, the transitional provisions need to be extended because the new technical measures will not be ready by 30 June 2011. The intention is to make as few substantive changes as possible and to cooperate constructively with the EP so that this dossier is well advanced by the time it is handed over to the Hungarian Presidency.

Likewise, for the same reasons, the technical measures for the Baltic Sea need to be moved out of the TAC and quota Regulation for the Baltic Sea. COM already set work in motion on 23 June 2010. In order to avoid a legal vacuum, the dossier needs to be approved by 1 January 2011. No substantive changes are planned.

4. Multiannual plans and current dossiers

The Belgian Presidency will continue the ongoing work on multiannual management plans:

- the multiannual plan for Atlantic horse mackerel;
- the multiannual plan for the anchovy stock in the Bay of Biscay.

The Belgian Presidency will also cooperate as much as possible in evaluating the multiannual plan for North Sea sole and plaice.

5. External policy

A large number of annual meetings of regional fisheries organisations will be held during the Belgian Presidency. Among them will be the ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna). A new negotiating mandate is needed for the part of that meeting dealing with bluefin tuna. This will be discussed at the October Council meeting.

There will be a number of bilateral events too. As usual, the Council will be looking at the Agreement between the EU and Norway in October and November. In addition, the Belgian Presidency will also work on renewing a number of protocols to Fisheries Partnership Agreements and the traditional annual negotiations will take place with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, amongst others, as well as under the coastal states agreements.
