

Brussels, 10 December 2010

## **Preparation Agriculture/Fisheries Council of December 2010**

The Agriculture & Fisheries Council will meet in Brussels on Monday 13 (**starting at 9.30 a.m.**) and Tuesday 14 December. It will be chaired for the Agriculture issues by Mrs Sabine Laruelle, Belgian minister for SMEs, the Self-Employment, Agriculture and Science Policy, and , for the points on Fisheries, by Mr Kris Peeters, Minister-President for the Flemish Region and responsible for Fisheries. Commissioners Maria Damanaki and Dacian Cioloş will represent the Commission at the meeting.

The Council will start with a presentation of the fisheries items on Monday morning. It will be followed by the presentation and a debate on the "dairy package". Over lunch, ministers will have a discussion on "Targeting CAP support to active farmers". After lunch, ministers will deal with the other agriculture items. They will return to the fisheries items afterwards and on Tuesday.

The points on the agenda are:

### **Fisheries**

#### **Atlantic and North Sea TACs and quotas – political agreement**

The Council will aim to reach political agreement on total allowable catches (TACs) and fishing effort limits for the Atlantic, the North Sea and international waters regulated by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. The Commission's proposal published in early November proposes TACs that take account of advice received from stakeholders, but which are above all in line with scientific advice.

According to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee (STECF), only 40% of the stocks concerned are currently being fished sustainably. The EU is committed to achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for all stocks by 2015. The Commission is therefore proposing quota increases for 6 stocks, quota decreases for 64 stocks and an unchanged quota for 23 stocks. The Commission is also concerned by the failure of the long-term management plans to deliver sustainable catches of cod, in particular in the Kattegat, the Irish Sea and the west of Scotland. Faced with the continued decline of these stocks, the Commission has proposed a 50% reduction in TAC for 2011 in these areas, to be accompanied by an in-depth review of the existing management arrangements.

See [IP/10/1501](#)

## **Black Sea TACs – political agreement**

The Council will aim to reach political agreement on the TACs and associated measures for the two fish stocks in the Black Sea targeted by EU fleets, turbot and sprat. Scientific advice for turbot indicates that the stock remains in poor condition, and the Commission has proposed a reduction in TAC of 25% for that reason. The proposed TAC for sprat is based on a hypothetical TAC for the whole of the Black Sea as advised by STECF, there being currently no agreed method for allocating quotas to the different parties concerned. The Commission believes that bringing EU fishing levels in the Black Sea into line with both scientific advice and the shared character of the sea basin is essential if the EU is to convince its international partners of the need to develop an effective regional approach to managing fisheries in the Black Sea.

See: [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/news\\_and\\_events/press\\_releases/301110/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/news_and_events/press_releases/301110/index_en.htm)

## **Agriculture**

### **Communication "The CAP towards 2020"**

On 18 November, the European Commission published a Communication on "the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) towards 2020 – Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future". The reform aims at making the European agriculture sector more dynamic, competitive, and effective in responding to the Europe 2020 vision of stimulating sustainable growth, smart growth and inclusive growth. The paper outlines three options for further reform. Following discussion of these ideas, the Commission will present formal legislative proposals in mid-2011.

After the presentation of the Communication by Commissioner Dacian Cioloş and a first brief reaction of the Member States during the November Council meeting, Ministers will now have an orientation debate based on a questionnaire from the Presidency.

The Communication, press release and other documents can be found on the internet at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/communication/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/communication/index_en.htm)

### **Contractual relations in the dairy sector – Report on the evolution of the market situation and the consequent conditions for smoothly phasing out of the milk quota system**

On 9 November, the Commission adopted a proposal on "contractual relations in the milk sector". The proposal aims to boost the position of the dairy producer in the dairy supply chain and prepare the sector for a more market oriented and sustainable future. It provides for written contracts between milk producers and processors, the possibility to negotiate contract terms collectively via producer organisations in a way as to balance the bargaining power of milk producers relative to major processors, specific EU rules for inter-branch organisations and measures for enhancing transparency in the market. The measures are proposed to be valid until 2020 with two intermediate reviews. Appropriate size limits for collective negotiations and other specific safeguard measures should ensure the achievement of the objectives of strengthening the bargaining power of milk producers whilst safeguarding competition and the interests of SMEs.

The Commission also adopted on the same day a report on the dairy market within the context of smoothly phasing out the milk quota system.

Commissioner Dacian Cioloş will present the draft Regulation and the report to the Ministers. It will be followed by a first discussion.

**This point will be public and can be followed in the press room of the Council (at around 11h00)**

All related documents can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/milk/index_en.htm)

#### **Quarterly report on the dairy market**

The Commission will present an updated quarterly report on the situation of the dairy market.

#### **Quality policy for agricultural products**

On 10 December, the Commission adopted the so-called "Quality Package". This package sets up for the first time a comprehensive policy on certification schemes, value-adding terms for agricultural product qualities, and product standards. Until now these have been spread among numerous pieces of legislation. With this Package, the Commission covers all facets of quality, from compliance with minimum standards to highly specific products.

The Quality Package comprises:

- A proposal for a new 'Agricultural Product Quality Schemes Regulation', bringing coherence and clarity to the EU schemes: reinforcing the flagship scheme for protected designations of origin and geographical indications (PDOs and PGIs); overhauling the traditional specialities guaranteed scheme (TSGs), and laying down a new framework for the development of Optional Quality Terms to provide consumers with information they increasingly demand, such as 'free range' and 'first cold pressing'.
- A proposal to streamline adoption of marketing standards by the Commission, including the power to extend place of farming labelling in accordance with the specificity of each agricultural sector.
- New Guidelines on best practices for voluntary certification schemes and on the labelling of products using geographical indications as ingredients.

Commissioner Dacian Cioloş will present the package to the Ministers.

**This point will be public and can be followed in the press room of the Council (at around 15h00)**

All documents related to the Quality Package are available on the internet at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/quality-package-2010/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/quality-package-2010/index_en.htm)

#### **Any Other Business (AOB)**

- Outcome of the reflexion day "The Pig meat Sector towards 2020" (Brussels, 3 December 2010) – Presentation by the Belgian Presidency