



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Work Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency
- Agriculture and Fisheries

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme drawn up by the Lithuanian Presidency to be presented at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 15 July 2013.

**WORK PROGRAMME OF THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

Common priorities

The programme of the Lithuanian Presidency **focuses on creating a credible, growing and open Europe.** It is a comprehensive programme that covers EU financial stability, economic growth and employment, youth employment in particular, the EU single market as well as regional security goals.

In the Agriculture and Fisheries Council the Presidency will seek to encourage **the sustainable, innovative and environmentally friendly** development of the **agriculture and food sector and fisheries** within the European Union.

Agriculture

After reaching the inter-institutional political agreement on the CAP reform package the Lithuanian **Presidency will finish the work related to the approval and the timely entry of the CAP package into force.**

In particular the Presidency will concentrate on discussing and adopting a **proposal on the necessary transitional CAP rules** on certain aspects of the CAP reform, mainly related to the system of direct payments and rural development. Elements of the proposal will ensure smooth transition from the CAP regulations of the current financial period to the new CAP reform legislation. Transitional rules will enter into force on 1 January 2014, so an agreement on the provisions has to be reached during the Lithuanian Presidency not only within the Council but also on the inter-institutional level, with **possible adoption of legal act at December Council** at the latest.

Fruit and vegetables sector

The fruit and vegetables sector occupies a very important place in the overall agricultural sector. The Presidency will work to strengthening the role of producer organizations and bargaining power in the food chain, particularly in fruit and vegetable sector. **Once the European Commission has submitted a report** concerning the implementation of Single Market organisation measures in the fruit and vegetable sector **and the respective legislative proposal, Lithuania will initiate negotiations on this issue.**

A presentation in the Council and discussions at working parties level are foreseen **on the proposal on scheme providing agricultural products to school children** pending its submission by the Commission at the end of the year.

Once the European Commission has tabled a **proposal on spirit drinks**, the Lithuanian Presidency **will initiate discussions at working parties level.**

Promotion measures for agricultural and food product export

Once the European Commission has tabled a proposal on information and promotion for agricultural products, **the Lithuanian Presidency will initiate discussion** at working parties level on this issue.

Forestry

The Lithuanian Presidency will pay due attention to the implementation of the principles of sustainable forestry in the Member States and **will propose to the Council to adopt conclusions on the new EU Forest Strategy.** This EU-level forest policy instrument will be based on the principle of subsidiarity and respect for national competences, with a special focus on climate change and renewable energy issues.

Alignment of the legislation to the Lisbon Treaty

The Presidency **will continue the work on alignment** of other food and agricultural legislation to the Lisbon Treaty (the completion of the **dossier related to the Omnibus Trade negotiations** (olive oil imports from Turkey, certain Community tariff quotas, imports of Bangladeshi rice), proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down the **trade arrangements applicable to certain goods resulting from the processing of agricultural products, proposal on aromatised wines, etc.**).

On 8-10 September 2013 the Presidency will host the **informal Council** ("Agriculture") in Vilnius with the main topic for discussions "Family Farming Prospects in the Context of Globalization".

On 29 September–1 October 2013, the Presidency will host **XXVII EURAGRI conference** in Vilnius on challenges behind research in the field of agriculture. The conference shall deal with the research and innovation funding policy in national and European level, also issues related to the agriculture and food production systems as well as food supply chain and its economic operators.

Decisions taken during the "health check" of the CAP as regards the elimination of the milk production quota system have provided for a liberalisation of the milk sector with better market orientation, allowing sector to take advantage of market opportunities. During the Lithuanian Presidency the Commission will highlight **the future of the milk sector after quotas abolishment** from 2015 by organising a **Conference on 24 September 2013 in Brussels**. Furthermore the Commission is expected to table a report on this matter.

Fisheries

In May 2013 the political agreement regarding the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was reached. The Lithuanian Presidency is determined to continue and complete the work on the third pillar in the reform of the CFP and will focus on reaching an **agreement with the European Parliament on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** which is designated to finance the implementation of the new CFP and the sustainable development of fisheries and the aquaculture sector in 2014-2020.

Given the importance of the dossier, the Presidency will aim to reach a **full "General Approach" at the Council in July** in order to start negotiations with European Parliament as soon as the Parliament will be prepared to engage in the trilogues.

The Presidency will also give a particular attention to the traditional process of **setting the total allowable catches (TACs) and the allocation of fishing quotas**.

During the debates on TACs and quotas in the Council the goal of the Presidency is an economically and environmentally balanced **political agreement on fishing opportunities for 2014** in the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea, and other EU and non-EU waters.

Another important issue during the Lithuanian Presidency is **long-term management plans**. Following the Council's proposal to establish an inter-institutional Task Force to help find the most appropriate way forward on this issue, expressed in the CFP reform context in May 2013, the Presidency intends to go in this direction in order **to find a solution**, that would respect the legal views of both sides and facilitate the development and introduction of multi-annual plans under the new Common Fisheries Policy.

As regards the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy, Lithuanian Presidency will lead the preparations by the Council for negotiations on sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with third countries, coastal states consultations and annual meetings of regional fisheries management organizations.

Talking about horizontal priorities of the Lithuanian Presidency – the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the Presidency will host the **Fourth Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region** in Vilnius on 11-12 November 2013.

The new package of legal acts "Healthier animals and plants – safer food".

The Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council will seek a simpler, more streamlined and modern EU legal framework in the areas of animal health and welfare, plant health, and animal feed and food.

Food safety is a particularly important issue to ensure consumer confidence. Even though in Europe we have one of the highest food safety standards in the world, the recent crises of food safety, mislabelling, and fraud as well as the outbreaks of contagious animal diseases force us to go forward and constantly update our legislation.

On May-June 2013 the European Commission published the **Food chain legislation package** which covers animal health and welfare, plant health, plant reproductive material, food safety, official control in food and feed chain and expenditure in these fields.

Lithuania will place **particular focus on** the proposal on a Regulation laying down provisions for the management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health and animal welfare, and relating to plant health and plant reproductive material. This **proposal on Expenditure** is of utmost importance as it should enter into force and be applied as of 2014 in order to allow smooth allocation of finances to programmes carried out by Member States and funds required to tackle the outbreaks of diseases and crises in food chain when necessary. The Presidency is fully aware of the necessity and urgency of this proposal and wants to prioritise negotiations on this issue with aim **to reach political agreement** during Lithuanian Presidency.

The Lithuanian Presidency will also **seek substantial progress** with the proposals **concerning animal health, plant health, production and marketing of plant reproductive material, official controls in the food and feed chain.**

Concerning the proposals that are coming, the Presidency is **ready to start the discussions in Council working groups** in order to make maximum of progress as soon as the European Commission delivers the proposals in following fields: **veterinary medicines and medicated feed, hygiene package, legislation of zootechnical issues, and cloning for food production.**

Lithuanian Presidency together with the Commission is organizing an **event on Modernisation of meat inspection which will take place on 15 October 2013** in Brussels.

Further, on 28-29 October 2013, Lithuanian Presidency in partnership with the Commission will highlight animal welfare questions by organising a **Conference on welfare of dogs and cats in the EU**. This conference as well will take place in Brussels.
