



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

Subject: Work Programme of the Danish Presidency
 - Agriculture and Fisheries

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme drawn up by the Danish Presidency to be presented at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 23 January 2012.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE DANISH PRESIDENCY

- AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES -

Europe should promote the transition to a green economy and enhance its focus on sustainability. This requires enhanced efforts to bring about this transition and tackle the rising problems of environmentally harmful production methods, over-utilisation of important natural resources and climate change. The EU must strive to achieve its climate and energy targets regarding increased energy efficiency by 2020 as well as expansion of renewable energy, enhanced energy efficiency and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Action must be taken to formulate an effective and green transport policy, common green standards in the Single Market and the widespread adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns. An agricultural sector that embraces environmentally, nature and climate-friendly farming methods is also part of the solution. Similarly, action is to be taken to bring about a sustainable reform of the EU fisheries policy. The funds for research and development within the environmental and energy sector must be increased. Lastly, the Presidency will also work towards ensuring a strong European voice at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

Economic growth and environmental concerns must go hand in hand in order for European agriculture, fisheries and food production to promote an overall green and economically viable European growth. Agriculture, fisheries and food production are essential industries to European economy and employment.

The overall themes: “A responsible Europe, a dynamic Europe, a green Europe and a safe Europe” will influence the presidency with the three priorities that call for most attention in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council:

- The reform of The Common Agricultural Policy
- The reform of The Common Fisheries Policy
- Improved Food Safety and Animal Welfare

Agriculture

One of the objectives of the future Common Agricultural Policy must be to strengthen the future of the agricultural and rural areas of the European Union and meet new challenges in relation to environment, nature and climate changes. An other objective of the future policy is to contribute to European competitiveness on the global market by continued market orientation.

The new Common Agricultural Policy must promote sustainable agriculture, protect the environment and the countryside and ensure stable food supplies by focusing on research, development and innovation within the agri-food sector.

An environmentally sustainable agricultural sector is part of the solution to many of the new challenges of today such as climate adjustment, reduction of CO₂ emissions and sustainable development.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is an important contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy and its priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. When European farmers accumulate highly valuable knowledge within their fields of work, particularly within the fields of technology and environmental sustainability, their knowledge must be shared and transferred.

European agricultural holdings are facing a hard time due to increasing costs and competition from outside Europe. The future Common Agricultural Policy must support and provide for new green earnings in the agricultural sector. This also includes the food sector.

The presidency will emphasize discussions on the reform package in order to ensure progress with the aim of identifying key elements to be part of a compromise. In this relation discussion on the proposals on the direct payments, the rural development policy, the single common market organisation and the horizontal regulation are foreseen in working parties and at Council level. Among others, topics as innovation, greening and simplification will be governing. The Presidency will seek to present a progress report on the reform package in June 2012.

Furthermore the Presidency intends to seek agreement on the proposals concerning transitional measures for the direct payments and the wine sector.

A presentation and orientation debate is foreseen on the amendment of the regulation on financing of the Common Agricultural Policy in relation to transparency (publication of beneficiaries). The Commission is also expected to present a Communication on promotion of agricultural products.

In relation to the alignment of the agricultural legislation to Lisbon-Treaty the Presidency will continue the dialogue with the European Parliament in order to seek a solution.

During the Danish Presidency the Commission will highlight research and innovation in the agricultural sector by organising a Conference on 7 March 2012. Furthermore the Commission is expected to table a Communication on the European Innovation Partnership "Agricultural productivity and sustainability".

On 3-5 June 2012 the Presidency will host the informal Council ("Agriculture") in Horsens, Denmark.

Fisheries

A new Common Fisheries Policy must ensure a sustainable management of the fisheries resources, the protection of ecosystems of the oceans and the interests of consumers. In order for European fishery to maintain economically sustainable in the years to come, it must likewise be environmentally sustainable. Therefore, the Presidency will work to diminish unwanted catch and effectively bring discards to an end.

Equally, the Presidency will promote the sustainability of external dimensions of the fisheries policy. The simplification of rules and a better coherence with environment and climate policies will be in focus.

An equally important aspect of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy is its contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy. Overall objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy will be reached by means of an ambitious reform. The Commission's initiatives on a reform package include a new basic Regulation, a new Common Market Organisation and a new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020.

With the aim of concluding the debate of certain parts of the reform, the Presidency will continue discussions on the reform package and ensure as much progress as possible.

Progress is to be made on the amendment of many other important proposals that are presented before or will be presented during the Danish Presidency, among others:

- Specific access requirements and associated conditions for fishing for deep sea stocks.
- Furthermore, the Presidency will initiate a policy debate in the Council about the yearly communication from the Commission on fishing opportunities for 2013.

The Presidency intends to conclude proposals for the renewal of several bilateral protocols to fisheries partnership agreements.

Food

EU consumers should always feel confident that the food they buy is safe, healthy, of high quality and produced bearing animal welfare in mind.

Besides giving priority to initiatives on the health and welfare of animals, further improvements of the high food safety standard of the EU through harmonisation of standards will be in focus during the Presidency.

The Presidency will promote actions to ensure and improve the existing high food safety standards and adequate information to consumers. Given the importance of the dossier, the Presidency will aim to reach agreement with the European Parliament in first reading of the proposal on food intended for infants and young children and on food for special medical purposes.

Taking the Commission's report on organic regulation as a starting point, the presidency intends to prioritize organic production and confidence with organic products.

The Presidency will work on the Commission package of Food quality with the purpose of reaching an agreement with the European Parliament.

The dangers of an excessive use of antimicrobials have been known for decades. All over Europe resistance towards lifesaving antimicrobials are emerging. On that basis, Denmark wishes to make antimicrobial resistance (AMR) a main priority during the Presidency.

The Presidency will focus on the use of antimicrobials in both human and veterinary medicine. On 14-15 March 2012 the Presidency will host a Conference on the challenges of tackling antimicrobial resistance in a European and international context.

Further, on 2-3 February 2012, the Presidency will host a Conference at expert level on the official meat inspection. The objective is to advocate for a modernisation of the systems for official meat controls towards a risk assessment based approach.

Animal welfare and health is an increasing concern of citizens, consumers, policymakers and authorities throughout Europe and it will be a priority for the Presidency.

Together with the Commission, the Presidency will host a Conference on the EU Strategy for Animal Welfare setting out guidelines for the future EU policy on animal welfare on 29 February and 1 March 2012.

On the basis of the Commission report on the regulation regarding the protection of animals during transport, the Presidency will seek to reach consensus on Council Conclusions on this subject.
