



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

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

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme drawn up by the Cyprus Presidency to be presented at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 16 July 2012.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CYPRUS PRESIDENCY

- AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES -

A sustainable, environmentally friendly and competitive agricultural and fisheries sector, based on solidarity, is of paramount importance for Europe and its citizens. The Cyprus Presidency will take forward the negotiations on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), in parallel with the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The Presidency will make every effort to ensure that, by the time an agreement on the MFF is reached, the work on the substance of the CAP and CFP reforms will be at an advanced stage, so as to allow a swift conclusion of the work. One of the core objectives will be simplification while ensuring sufficient flexibility for Member States, taking account of national/regional specificities and needs.

Taking Common Agricultural Policy a step forward

One of the main objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy reform is to ensure that, in the future, agriculture will continue to accommodate citizens' demands and expectations concerning food safety and quality, as well as delivery of public goods, and will contribute to meeting the challenges relating to the protection of the environment, climate change, conservation and efficient use of natural resources and energy security, contributing to the objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy. The Presidency will pay particular attention to the further streamlining and simplification of the CAP, allowing for targeted and efficient implementation of the policy. At the same time, the Presidency will work towards a competitive and sustainable European agricultural sector in the global context, tapping on existing potential for high quality food production and efficient use of resources. Innovation and contributing to ensure food security are high on the agenda, the Presidency will therefore attach importance to improving, in particular, synergy, coordination and cooperation between researchers, advisors and the agro-food industry, as well as to the need to ensure a basic level of direct support to farmers. The needs of Europe's small farms, which make up 75% of all farms, should also be addressed.

The Presidency will aim to take the discussions on the substance of CAP reform a step forward. Concerning the various elements of the proposed new direct payments system, the Cyprus Presidency will seek to achieve consensual solutions, by promoting flexible approaches and simplification, paying attention to synergy and complementarity with the second pillar. The Presidency will also work intensively on the proposed Rural Development Regulation, ensuring that the new framework will be targeted, yet, flexible enough, to accommodate particular needs of Member States. An effective safety net for farmers, flexible crisis management tools and deeper cooperation along the food chain will be needed in the future. In this respect the Presidency will press ahead with the discussions on the Single Common Market Organisation and the financing of the CAP Regulations, including the amendment on the publication of beneficiaries. The Presidency will organize focused debates aiming to reach a partial general approach that reflects the centre of gravity in the Council on the key elements of the reform, before the end of the year. Meanwhile the Presidency will press forward with the finalisation work and adoption by Council of the transitional regulations for direct payments in 2013 and for support to vine-growers as well as the regulation for quality schemes for agricultural products, once there is final agreement with the European Parliament

Promoting food safety and animal health

Access to safe and healthy food products is a vital part of consumer protection. It is essential that common rules for safe food are defined from ‘farm to fork’. The Presidency will start the examination, upon submission by the Commission, of the package proposal for the New Animal Health Law, the Revision of the Official Controls, the new Plant Health regime and the new Marketing of Seeds and Propagating Material Regulation. The aim is to establish a clearer regulatory framework combining, simplifying and streamlining the existing legal framework and ensuring sufficient and sustainable funding for official controls.

Furthermore, the Presidency will launch work on the revision of the Hygiene Package and carry forward work on the proposals for the Electronic Identification of Bovines and the voluntary labeling of beef and the new Pet Regulation with a view for a first reading agreement with the European Parliament.

An efficient and sustainable fisheries sector

The main objective of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is to ensure the recovery of fish stocks and bring an end to overfishing. At the same time, the reformed CFP should minimize the impact on ecosystems, ensure that fishing activities are environmentally sustainable and that the EU fishing sector is socially and economically viable. The CFP reform package, which includes a Basic Regulation, a Common Market Organization and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014 – 2020, needs to provide the necessary tools that will help the European fisheries sector to tackle and resolve current problems, as well as face future challenges. In this context, important objectives of the Presidency are to promote the simplification of rules and procedures and to support and ensure better coherence and complementarity of the fisheries policy with other EU relevant policies. The Cyprus Presidency will make every effort to progress the proposals of the CFP package.

Regarding the Total Allowance Catches (TACs) and Quotas for 2013, the Presidency will organize work in a way to ensure their timely adoption, on the basis of scientific advice and taking into consideration the social, economic and territorial impacts of the decisions to be taken. The Presidency will also seek to conclude the work on the renewal of several bilateral protocols of fisheries partnership agreements and to coordinate, in an efficient manner, the annual negotiations in the framework of International and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations.
