



**COUNCIL OF
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NOTE

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

Delegations will find in Annex the Work programme drawn up by the Hellenic Presidency to be presented at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 17 February 2014.

WORK PROGRAMME OF THE HELLENIC PRESIDENCY

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

Horizontal Priorities

The Work Programme of the Hellenic Presidency focuses on boosting growth, jobs and cohesion, on promoting the further integration of the European Union and of the euro area, and on matters relating to migration and mobility.

The Hellenic Presidency also intends to devote particular attention to the Union's maritime policies, a theme that will run horizontally through the Presidency's priorities.

Agriculture

In the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, the Presidency will seek to encourage the competitive, high-quality, sustainable, innovative and environmentally-friendly development of the agriculture, food and fisheries sectors of the European Union.

The CAP reform was recently approved, and we must ensure that the transition to the new system is smooth and facilitates farmers' productive activities and investment.

At the same time, we will have to evaluate some of the CAP measures, and identify the necessary improvements. The position of farmers and family farms in the commercial process should be strengthened. They should be brought closer to consumers.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of European agriculture, and one of its comparative advantages, is its diversity, and we should reap the benefits it offers. High-quality, recognised and safe products that meet strict EU production standards and reflect the special care invested by family farms merit particular attention.

Delegated acts for the CAP

Completing CAP reform will be a priority for the Hellenic Presidency. The Commission is expected to adopt delegated acts in line with political agreement on the new CAP regulations. The Council will thus be able to reach agreement, creating a stable environment in which the EU's farmers can produce and invest.

Promotion of agricultural products

The Hellenic Presidency welcomes the Commission proposal for modernising and reinforcing the regime for promoting agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries. Technical examination of the proposal by the competent Council Working Party is under way, and the Presidency hopes that the Council and the European Parliament will be able to work in parallel to make significant progress in negotiations before the end of the parliamentary term.

Fruit and vegetables

The fruit and vegetable sector is vital for many regions of the EU, for the EU economy and for healthy nutrition. The Presidency will begin to examine the report which the Commission is due to present, and the related legislative proposal, in the light of the results of the 2007 reform.

Schemes providing agricultural products to school children

The Council is examining the Commission proposal for school schemes to distribute agricultural products to pupils. The Hellenic Presidency's goal is to examine the proposal at technical level and to submit a progress report to the Council.

Report on the dairy sector

The dairy sector is crucial for the EU economy and employment. The Hellenic Presidency will hold discussions within the Council on the situation and future of the sector. and in June 2014 on the results of the implementation of the dairy package.

Conditions in the dairy market at the moment are favourable, and the time is perhaps ripe to examine whether all the measures adopted as part of the dairy package and the CAP reform are adequate to the challenges of a crisis situation, especially with regard to less-favoured areas where production conditions are difficult.

Organic farming

The results of the public consultation on organic farming carried out in early 2013 showed how interested the public is in organic farming and organic products. Many Member States are in favour of simplifying existing legislation, and the Commission recognises that there are weaknesses in the system which need to be re-examined. The Hellenic Presidency welcomes the Commission's announcement that it will present its legislative proposal in March, and is ready to deal with the new proposal.

Outermost regions of the EU

Should the Commission submit a proposal, the Presidency will begin examining it. The aim is to review agricultural measures for those regions, having regard to their effectiveness and the recent CAP reform.

Alignment with the Treaty

The Presidency will continue work on alignment with the Lisbon Treaty. Following submission of the Commission proposal aligning the Regulation on spirit drinks with the Treaty, the Hellenic Presidency will take forward examination of the proposal in the Working Party. The Regulation on imports of rice originating in Bangladesh is nearing adoption.

Optional quality term 'Product of island farming'

The Commission report on the case for an optional quality term 'product of island farming' sets out the potential consequences of a legislative initiative to establish such a term. The Presidency will hold an exchange of views in the Council on that issue and possible conclusions, as well as on the Commission report on local farming and direct sales Implementation of the European Innovation Partnership

The Commission will submit to the Council a document on the possible follow-up to and use of the Commission Communication on the European Innovation Partnership "Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability" in the framework of the Strategy on this subject adopted by the High Level Steering Group.

Healthier animals and plants for a safer food chain

With regard to the legislative package "Healthier animals and plants for a safer food chain" the Hellenic Presidency is aiming to complete the technical examination of the individual proposals on animal health, preventive measures against organisms harmful to plants, the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material and official controls.

The Presidency intends to draft compromise texts which will incorporate the views expressed by the Member States.

In particular, with regard to the proposal for a Regulation on the management of expenditure in the veterinary and phytosanitary sectors, the Lithuanian Presidency and the Parliament have both worked hard to reach agreement at political level.

Concerning the proposal on plant reproductive material, pending the plenary vote in the European Parliament, most likely in March, the Council will continue its careful examination of the proposal with regard to its effects and consequences in order to ensure clear rules and legal certainty.

Other proposals

The Hellenic Presidency is ready to begin the technical examination of the proposals submitted recently by the European Commission, and of the proposals which will be submitted in due course, in particular those concerning animal cloning, the review of legislation on zootechnical matters, the review of the hygiene package and concerning legislation on veterinary medicines and medicated feed.

The Presidency intends to discuss the European Commission report regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for meat used as an ingredient.

Fisheries

Following the adoption of the regulations on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and on the common organisation of the markets in fisheries and aquaculture products, the Greek Presidency will continue its work on completing the negotiations on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which is intended to fund the implementation of the new Common Fisheries Policy and sustainable development in the fisheries and aquaculture sector for the period 2014-2020.

The Hellenic Presidency's priority is to continue the work of the Task Force on the multiannual management plans in order to find a solution that respects the legal opinions of the two institutions and will facilitate the development of multiannual management plans under the new Common Fisheries Policy. The Presidency intends to work on the multiannual plans concerning two-species fisheries and mixed fisheries.

In view of the entry into force of the landing obligation from 1 January 2015, the Presidency intends to advance examination of the omnibus Regulation on the ban on discards in order to ensure its adoption by the end of this year.

In addition, the Presidency will give particular emphasis to harmonising the existing regulations with the Lisbon Treaty and has already completed the negotiations on the proposal on alignment for cetaceans.

Regarding the external fisheries policy, the Hellenic Presidency will prepare the negotiations on protocols in the framework of a number of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with third countries, the bilateral and multilateral negotiations and the annual meetings of the regional fisheries management organisations.

Lastly, the Hellenic Presidency will pay particular attention to the annual meeting of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), to be held in Rome in May 2014. The Presidency also plans to host a special session of the GFCM in Greece in order to amend the GFCM Agreement.

From 4 to 6 May the Presidency will host the informal Council of Agriculture Ministers in Athens, where the topic "Exploiting the diversity of European agriculture" will be discussed.

In addition:

- on 18 February 2014 the Hellenic Presidency and the organisation Compassion in World Farming are co-organising a conference in Brussels on: "Averting Farmageddon: Sustainable Food for All"

- on 13 and 14 March 2014 the European Commission is organising an international conference in Thessaloniki, under the aegis of the Hellenic Presidency, on "Fishing Capacity Management".

- on 7 April 2014, with the support of the Hellenic Presidency and the European Commission, the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) and the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) are co-organising a conference in Brussels on: "Ensuring Health & Sustainability in Europe: Doctors and Veterinarians emphasize "prevention is better than cure"

and

- on 23 April 2014 the Hellenic Presidency and the European Commission (Joint Research Centre) are co-organising a conference in Athens on: "Scientific support to agriculture: competitiveness, quality and sustainability".