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Agriculture and Fisheries

Luxembourg, 15 October 2018

President **Elisabeth Köstinger**
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P R E S S

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
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ITEMS DEBATED

AGRICULTURE

Post 2020 CAP reform package: CAP strategic plans

In public session the Council discussed a [progress report](#) on the work carried out in the Council preparatory bodies on the Commission proposal for a regulation on CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) strategic plans, which are the cornerstone of the reform package.

Ministers also exchanged views on the issues of simplification and flexibility for member states contained in the proposal, as well as on the new greening architecture proposed by the Commission, its proportionality and the appropriateness of the proposed instruments.

During the debate, many ministers welcomed in principle the shift to a performance-based CAP, but considered that the new delivery model could increase complexity and the administrative burden. While many delegations asked for simplification and flexibility, including in the selection of targets and policy implementation, others stressed the need to maintain the common nature of European agricultural policy.

As regards the new green architecture, although the increased ambition was generally welcomed, many ministers considered that such ambition was not in line with the proposed CAP budget and that new measures should be implemented in a flexible and targeted way on the basis of national needs.

The proposed reform package is worth €365 billion and consists of three proposals for:

- a regulation on CAP strategic plans ([9645/18](#) + [ADD 1](#))
- a regulation on financing, managing and monitoring of the CAP ([9634/18](#) + [ADD 1](#))
- a regulation on a common market organisation of agricultural products ([9556/18](#))

and an impact assessment ([9646/18](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#)).

The Commission's proposals introduce a new delivery model under which member states will have more flexibility in how to use their funds and will be able to tailor their programmes. A single set of 9 EU-wide economic, environmental and social objectives will be identified at EU level and each member state will have to draw up a Strategic Plan covering the whole programming period, setting out how it intends to meet those objectives, using both direct payments and rural development. The Commission will approve each plan to ensure consistency and the protection of the single market, and monitor progress towards objectives and targets using a set of result indicators agreed at EU level.

The Commission proposals also outline new obligations and incentives for farmers in the field of environment and climate action. Direct payments will be conditional on enhanced environmental and climate requirements and member states will have to offer eco-schemes to support farmers in going beyond the mandatory requirements, funded with a share of their national direct payment allocations.

Moreover, the new CAP will better target small and young farmers, thereby facilitating generational renewal, and will try to foster greater use of knowledge and innovation.

G20 meeting of agriculture ministers, 27-28 July 2018 - Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Commission briefed the Council on the outcome of the last G20 meeting that took place in Buenos Aires on 27-28 July 2018.

The European Union participated in this meeting on the basis of common guidelines, prepared and endorsed by the Council in June 2018.

The outcome of the G20 meeting was a [declaration](#) focusing on the comprehensive and responsible management of soils. The declaration contains various measures aimed at combining improved productivity with sustainability in agriculture, reducing soil pollution and protecting biodiversity. A joint agreement on climate action was also reached, stressing the particular responsibility of the agricultural sector. Other topics included reducing food loss and waste and continuing the fight against antimicrobial resistance.

Any other business– *African swine fever (ASF)*

The Commission informed the Council about the evolution of the disease in the EU, giving details as to the epidemiological situation and the control measures implemented. The Commission took the opportunity to call on member states to properly enforce existing measures in a consistent manner throughout the EU and ensure cross-border coordination and close cooperation among various sectors and actors. The Commission also warned against additional unilateral measures imposed by individual member states, explaining that they could undermine the integrity of the internal market, create unjustified barriers to trade, send a wrong signal to third countries and harm the entire EU pig sector.

Several ministers shared the Commission's views on the importance of preparedness, monitoring and coordination, and on the need to avoid unjustified unilateral measures.

– *Situation in the sugar sector*

The Italian delegation informed the Council about the recent deterioration of market conditions in the European sugar sector, which has been marked by a significant fall in prices linked to oversupply. It also called on the Commission to activate the measures needed to balance the market in the short and medium term, in particular by private storage, and to assess the possibility of activating exceptional measures.

While several ministers shared the Italian concerns, the Commission assessment was that, although it was important to closely monitor market developments in the sugar sector, it was too early to activate the safety net. The Commission recalled the market-orientation of the CAP and signalled that operators could adjust quickly to the new market conditions, thereby reducing the pressure on prices. It also reminded delegations of the instruments available under the second pillar of the CAP to support the sector.

– ***2019 election of the next Director-General of the FAO***

The presidency informed the Council about the positive outcome of the informal process launched at the beginning of the year to identify a single EU candidate for the 2019 election of the next Director-General of the FAO - UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. The presidency noted that Ms Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, former French Under Secretary of State and former Executive Director of EFSA, had emerged as the single EU candidate. Her candidacy was broadly welcomed by ministers during the informal meeting in Schloss Hof, Austria.

– ***Spanish candidacy for the post of director general of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV)***

The Spanish delegation informed the Council that the next OIV General Assembly on 23 November 2018 in Uruguay would proceed with the third round of voting for the election of the new OIV director general, after two unsuccessful attempts in July and September. The Spanish delegation took the opportunity to encourage other member states to support the Spanish candidacy in order to better promote European interests in the organisation and defend the EU agricultural model.

FISHERIES

Fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2019

The Council reached a political agreement on fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for next year.

Press release: [Baltic Sea - Council decides on how much can be fished in 2019](#)

The objective of the discussion was to fix TACs (total allowable catches) and quotas for member states for the commercially most important fish stocks in the Baltic Sea in 2019. The work of the Council was based on a [Commission proposal](#) and built on the extensive preparatory work carried out in the BALTFISH high-level group.

EU/Norway: annual consultations for 2019

The Council held an exchange of views on the position to be taken by the EU at the annual consultations with Norway under their bilateral fisheries agreement. The consultations for 2019 will be held in Bergen, Norway, from 26 to 30 November 2018.

The main issues considered by ministers in establishing the EU position were the following:

- i. the approach to be taken by the EU on the main jointly-managed stocks in the North Sea (cod, haddock, plaice, whiting, herring, mackerel and saithe) and Skagerrak (cod, haddock, whiting, plaice, shrimp, herring and sprat), involving notably the establishment of TACs and quotas for the respective parties;
- ii. how to exchange reciprocal fishing possibilities in order, inter alia, to enable the continuation of a number of important fishing operations (e.g. Arcto-Norwegian cod in Norwegian waters), as well as other measures in fisheries of mutual interest.

The EU-Norway bilateral fisheries agreement dates from 1980. This agreement covers joint stocks in the North Sea, some jointly managed, others not. For the jointly-managed stocks, annual TACs are agreed between the EU and Norway. There are joint long-term management plans for cod, haddock, herring, saithe and whiting, and basic principles for a long-term management plan for plaice. A ten-year agreement with Norway on mackerel, concluded in January 2010, includes mutual access in the North Sea.

ICCAT annual meeting, 12 to 19 November 2018 - Dobrovnik, Croatia

Ministers exchanged views on the position to be taken by the EU at the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), scheduled for 12-19 November 2018 in Croatia.

The agenda of the meeting comprises, among other matters, a review of the various activities of the organisation, including the work of the ICCAT Standing Committee on research and statistics (SCRS), which in this context makes a series of stock assessments and recommendations to the ICCAT Commission. These SCRS assessments and recommendations traditionally create the focus for the proposals for recommendations by the EU and other contracting parties. This year, new stock assessments are expected for bigeye tuna and blue marlin on the basis of which the multiannual conservation and management programme for tropical tunas will have to be updated.

Other important topics to be discussed will be the multiannual management plan for bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean and a review of the report of the ICCAT working group on amendments to the ICCAT Convention.

Delegations' comments focused on the importance of bluefin tuna in the Eastern Atlantic and the Mediterranean and tropical tunas.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

AGRICULTURE

Skimmed Milk Powder

The Council decided to confirm in 2019 the rules already adopted at the beginning of the year and set at zero tonnes the quantitative limitation for buying in skimmed milk powder (SMP) at a fixed price.

See [press release](#).

FISHERIES

Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources

The Council adopted the position that the Commission will take on behalf of the EU and its member states at the XXXVII annual meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), which will take place in Hobart, Australia, from 22 October to 2 November 2018.

The CCAMLR is, among other matters, responsible for the adoption of conservation measures designed to ensure the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources. Such measures may become binding upon the EU, which is a contracting party together with 12 EU member states and 23 other states.

TRADE

EU-Singapore trade and investment agreements

On 15 October, the Council adopted decisions on the signature and conclusion of two agreements between the EU and Singapore:

- a free trade agreement
- an investment protection agreement

The EU and Singapore are expected to sign both agreements, as well as a partnership and cooperation agreement, on 19 October, in the margins of the ASEM summit in Brussels.

See [press release](#)

BUDGETS

Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Portugal

The Council adopted a decision mobilising €4.7 million under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to provide support for 1 161 workers made redundant in two enterprises in the wearing apparel manufacturing sector in Norte, Centro and Lisboa ([12511/18](#)). The redundancies are the result of a continuation of major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation.

The EGF helps workers to find new jobs and develop new skills when they have lost their jobs as a result of changing global trade patterns, e.g. when a large company shuts down or a factory is moved outside the EU, or as a result of the global financial and economic crisis. The help provided by the EGF consists of co-financing measures such as job-search assistance, careers advice, tailor-made training and re-training, mentoring and promoting entrepreneurship. It also provides one-off, time-limited individual support, such as job-search allowances, mobility allowances and allowances for participating in lifelong learning and training activities.

Draft EU budget for 2019 - non-approval of the European Parliament's amendments

The Council decided to not approve the amendments of the European Parliament to the Council's position on the draft budget for 2019, should they be adopted by the European Parliament, and approved a letter to the European Parliament to that effect ([12593/18](#)).

Mobilisation of the EU solidarity fund for Latvia

The Council adopted a decision mobilising €17.7 million in commitments and payments from the EU solidarity fund to provide financial assistance to Latvia ([12515/18](#)). The assistance is provided in response to disasters that occurred during the summer and autumn of 2017 due to flooding affecting the Latgale region and surrounding territories.

The EU solidarity fund can be mobilised in the event of a major natural disaster with serious repercussions on living conditions, the natural environment or the economy in a member state or a candidate country which has already begun accession negotiations. Assistance from the fund takes the form of a single grant, with no co-financing required. It is meant to help the beneficiary country to restore infrastructure, provide temporary accommodation, secure preventive infrastructure and clean up disaster-stricken areas, as needed.

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Council Decision on the application of UNECE Regulations 9, 63 and 92

The Council adopted a Decision on the application of regulations 9, 63 and 92 of the Agreement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe concerning the adoption of uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted to and/or be used on wheeled vehicles and the conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals granted on the basis of these prescriptions.

The incorporation of these regulations into EU law is intended to remove technical barriers to trade in motor vehicles between the Contracting Parties to the above-mentioned agreement and to ensure that such vehicles offer a high level of safety and protection ([11900/18](#)).

Cumulation of origin - EU-Norway agreement

The Council decided to conclude an agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Norway on the cumulation of origin between the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and Turkey in the framework of the Generalised System of Preferences of the European Union ([5883/17 REV 2](#) and [5814/17](#)).

Cumulation of origin - EU- Switzerland agreement

The Council decided to conclude an agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation on the cumulation of origin between the European Union, Switzerland, Norway and Turkey in the framework of the Generalised System of Preferences of the European Union ([5882/17 REV 2](#) and [5803/17](#)).

TRANSPORT

International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Committees - EU position

The Council adopted a decision on an EU position for the 73rd session of the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee and the 100th session of the Maritime Safety Committee concerning pollution prevention and inspections ([12530/18](#), [12495/18](#) and [12103/18](#)).

The position relates to the adoption of amendments to certain mandatory instruments. The amendments concern, inter alia, the prohibition on the carriage of non-compliant fuel oil (i.e. fuel oil with a sulphur content that exceeds 0.5%) for combustion purposes for propulsion or operation on board a ship and the inspection of single-hull oil tankers. Those amendments would be capable of decisively influencing the content of Union law.

Transport of dangerous goods - Adaptation to scientific and technical progress

The Council decided not to oppose the entry into force of a Commission directive amending the annexes to directive [2008/68/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on the inland transport of dangerous goods ([12738/18](#)).

The directive amends the 2008 directive on the transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterways in order to take into account the scientific and technical progress that has been made.

The new Commission directive is a delegated act that may now enter into force unless the European Parliament objects.