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## OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3701st Council meeting

### Agriculture and Fisheries

Luxembourg, 18 June 2019

President **Petre Daea**  
Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development of  
Romania

# 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>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **FISHERIES**

#### **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**

In public session, the Council reached a partial general approach on the Commission proposal for the next European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The fund is worth €6.14 billion and its aim is to invest in the maritime economy and support fishing communities.

[European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2021-2027: Council ready to negotiate with the European Parliament \(press release\)](#)

The new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund is part of the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, the new EU long-term budget that enters into force on 1 January 2021.

The proposal aims to support the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) including aquaculture, and the implementation of the Union's maritime policy, as well as to strengthen the Union's international commitments regarding ocean governance, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The proposal identifies four priorities:

- fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources
- contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets
- enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities
- strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans

The EMFF will also support voluntary contributions to international organisations and technical assistance.

## State of play of the Common Fisheries Policy and fishing opportunities for 2020

The Council was briefed on a Commission communication on the state of play of the Common Fisheries Policy and consultation on the fishing opportunities for 2020 ([10186/19](#) and [10186/19 ADD 1](#)).

In the ensuing exchange of views member states generally welcomed the communication and restated their commitment to the CFP objectives. Delegations underlined that 2020 would be a challenging year, as it was the deadline for the EU to set sustainable catches limits at MSY (maximum sustainable yield) level, just one year after the implementation of the landing obligation. Accordingly, many called for practical solutions to address the difficulties linked to mixed fisheries.

The Commission communication gives an overview of the state of play of the CFP, sets out the principles intended to underpin the Commission's proposal for fishing opportunities for 2020 and opens a public consultation on this issue for member states, advisory councils, different stakeholders and the public.

The communication reports on the situation of the stocks, both globally and by region, and the progress made in achieving sustainable fisheries, in particular with regard to the objective of reaching MSY as soon as possible and by 2020 at the latest. The document assesses, among others, the state of the EU fleet and its economic performance, the external dimension of the CFP and the new regionalised approach to fisheries management.

The communication also outlines the suggested working method and guidelines for proposing the Total Allowable Catches (TACs).

**Any other business****– *Eastern Baltic cod: situation of the stock and actions***

At the request of the Lithuanian delegation, the Council was informed of the scientific advice recently published by ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) on the state of the cod stock in the Eastern Baltic Sea. The report confirms the deteriorated status of the stock and recommends zero catch in 2020.

The Lithuanian delegation urged the Commission to present a comprehensive action plan addressing the causes of the critical situation of Eastern cod, together with measures to alleviate the negative socio-economic consequences of a possible zero catch limit.

The request was supported by various delegations and some underlined that it was necessary, in the longer term, to have a comprehensive approach taking into account all the dimensions of the problem, including those not related to fisheries, such as climate. The Commission announced emergency measures for six months.

**– *Joint Recommendations under Article 11 of the CFP***

The Commission informed the Council about the current use of Article 11(3) of the CFP regulation in the field of environmental legislation (Habitats and Birds directives). Under Article 11(3) member states may initiate and jointly adopt joint recommendations.

The Commission noted that only a few joint recommendations on fisheries conservation measures had been submitted so far, and took the opportunity to encourage member states to step up their efforts and cooperation to submit such joint recommendations.

The 2013 reform of the CFP introduced regionalisation to allow for regional groups of member states to put forward recommendations, including for fisheries conservation measures that are necessary for complying with environmental legislation, as the basis for Commission delegated acts.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform package: progress report**

In public session the Council discussed a presidency progress report (10008/19) on the work carried out in the Council and its preparatory bodies on all the Commission proposals of the CAP reform package, which includes regulations on CAP strategic plans, financing, management and monitoring of the CAP, and the common organisation of agricultural products.

The report describes the work carried out by the presidency both at technical and political level on a variety of issues such as: definitions and related conditions, types of interventions in the form of direct payments, sectoral types of interventions, types of interventions for rural development, the "new delivery model", indicators, "green architecture", coordination and governance framework, financial discipline, suspension of payments, ban of certain wine varieties, wine labelling.

In the ensuing debate, the majority of delegations welcomed the report as a fair picture of the state of play of discussions, and commended the progress achieved under the Romanian presidency. Delegations considered the report to be a good basis to continue work under the incoming Finnish presidency, as more discussion was considered necessary on key features of the Commission proposals, such as the implementation of the CAP strategic plans, reporting on intermediate results and the "green architecture". Several delegations also considered a deal on the EU's multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027 to be a pre-condition for reaching an agreement on the CAP post-2020. Ministers also took the opportunity to restate some of their national priorities.

#### The Commission's proposals

The Commission's proposals for a CAP reform introduce a new delivery model that will allow member states more flexibility in the way they use EU funds and will allow them to tailor-make their programmes. Based on 9 EU-wide economic, environmental and social objectives, each member state would have to draw up a Strategic Plan setting out how it intends to meet those objectives while taking account of its needs, using direct payments, rural development and market measures. The Commission would 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 would be conditional on enhanced environmental and climate requirements and member states would have to offer eco-schemes to support farmers in going beyond the mandatory requirements, funded with a share of their national direct payments' allocations.

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

#### **Any other business**

- *Outcome of the CAP Green Architecture post-2020 Congress "Digging deeper into Eco-Schemes", Zafra, Spain, 29-31 May 2019*

The Spanish delegation informed the Council of the outcome of the abovementioned congress organised jointly with the Autonomous Community of Extremadura in Zafra.

The congress, which followed another conference on Green Architecture held in the Netherlands in February 2019, offered an opportunity to debate the environmental and climate change challenges faced by European agriculture, with a specific focus on the realities of the situation in Southern Europe, and to further explore the issue of eco-schemes.

The information point was discussed together with the post-2020 CAP reform package.



## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Conclusions on biosecurity**

The Council today adopted a set of conclusions on "biosecurity: an overall concept with a unitary approach" ([10368/1/19 REV 1](#)).

At a practical level, biosecurity is generally understood as the management of and physical measures designed to reduce the risk of transboundary animal diseases (TADs). More broadly, it is a strategic and holistic approach to managing relevant risks. A high level of biosecurity is essential for the protection of EU territory against the introduction and spread of animal diseases, many of which may have devastating consequences not only for the agriculture sector but society as a whole.

In its conclusions, the Council strongly emphasises the key role of biosecurity in facing current threats such as African swine fever and foot-and-mouth disease, and stresses the importance of the involvement and cooperation of all relevant sectors and actors, including, for example, transporters and hunters as well as farmers and other animal keepers.

To this end, the Council calls on member states and the European Commission to ensure sufficient biosecurity capacity and adequate financial resources both at national and EU level.

The conclusions also highlight the risks posed by the human factor and the role of communication and awareness campaigns in mitigating those risks.

**Pesticides: maximum residue levels for various substances**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annexes II, III and V to regulation 396/2005 as regards maximum residue levels for 2,5 dichlorobenzoic acid methylester, mandipropamid and profoxydim in or on certain products ([8934/19](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#)).

Regulation 396/2005 establishes the maximum quantities of pesticide residues permitted in products of animal or vegetable origin intended for human or animal consumption. These maximum residue levels (MRLs) include, on the one hand, MRLs which are specific to particular foodstuffs intended for human or animal consumption and, on the other, a general limit that applies where no specific MRL has been set. MRL applications are communicated to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which issues a scientific opinion on each intended new MRL. Based on the EFSA's opinion the Commission proposes a regulation, such as the one cited above, to establish a new MRL or to amend or remove an existing MRL and that will modify the annexes of regulation 396/2005 accordingly.

**Third AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference (Rome, 21 June 2019): Draft Declaration**

The Council approved the text of a draft declaration and action agenda as the position of the European Union and its member states for the Third African Union-European Union Agriculture Ministerial Conference, to be held in Rome on 21 June 2019.

The Council also authorised the Commission to sign the draft declaration on behalf of the EU and its member states.

The theme of the third AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference will be 'Promoting sustainable regional agri-food value chains'. The conference aims to follow up on the commitments for enhanced cooperation in the field of agriculture made at the 2017 fifth AU-EU Summit ('Investing in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development'). The Conference also provides an opportunity for the AU and the EU to ensure high-level political commitment to the key recommendations included in the final report of the Task Force Rural Africa, which were presented to the 'Agriculture and Fisheries' Council on 15 April 2019.

## **JUSTICE**

### **Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)**

The Council adopted a decision by which it formalised the EU's request to join the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO), with observer status ([9884/19](#)).

The EU's request is expected to be examined by GRECO at its 83rd plenary meeting taking place from 17 to 21 June 2019.

GRECO was established in 1999 by the Council of Europe. GRECO's objective is to improve the capacity of its members to fight corruption by monitoring their compliance with anti-corruption standards through a dynamic process of mutual evaluation and peer pressure. Currently, GRECO comprises 49 Member States (48 European states, including all the Member States of the European Union, and the United States of America) and 10 observers.

## **INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY**

### **EU position in UNECE committees on wheeled vehicles regulations**

The Council adopted the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the relevant Committees of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) as regards a series of proposed amendments to UN Regulations, Global Technical Regulations (GTRs), Mutual Resolution M.R.2, authorisations to develop GTRs, as well as the proposal for one new UN Regulation concerning wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or be used on wheeled vehicles. ([9871/19](#))

### **EU position on common transit procedure**

The Council adopted the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the EU-CTC Joint Committee established by the Convention of 20 May 1987 on a common transit procedure as regards a number of proposed amendments to that Convention. ([9691/19](#))