



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 23 December 2020  
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**DRAFT MINUTES**  
COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
**(Agriculture and Fisheries)**  
15 and 16 December 2020

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## MEETING ON TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020

### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The Council adopted the agenda set out in 13773/20.

### 2. Approval of "A" items

#### **Non-legislative list**

13785/20

The Council adopted the "A" items listed in 13785/20 including COR and REV documents presented for adoption.

#### Non-legislative activities

#### FISHERIES

3. **Council Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea** ☐ 13850/20  
12189/20  
+ ADD 1-2  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement*
4. **Council Regulation fixing for 2021 and 2022 the fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea stocks** ☐ 13853/20  
12126/20 + ADD 1  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement*
5. **Council Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities in the Mediterranean and Black Seas** ☐ 13292/20  
10154/20 + ADD 1  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement*

The Council reached a unanimous political agreement on the Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters; on the Regulation fixing for 2021 and 2022 the fishing opportunities for Union fishing vessels for certain deep-sea stocks; and on the Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

## AGRICULTURE

6. **Conclusions on an EU-wide animal welfare label** 13691/20  
*Approval*

Based on a draft text prepared by the Presidency, the Council approved the Conclusions on an EU-wide animal welfare label as set out in document 13691/20 and took note of the statement of Italy (see Annex).

7. **Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling** 13694/20  
*Approval*

The Council could not reach a consensus on the draft Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling. The text prepared by the Presidency as set out in document 13694/20 will take the form of Presidency conclusions supported by 23 delegations. The Council took note of the joint statement of the Czech Republic, Greece and Italy (see Annex).

### Any other business

## 8. Fisheries

- a) COVID-19 crisis in fisheries and aquaculture sector 13854/20  
in 2021  
*Information from the Croatian delegation, on behalf of the Bulgarian, Croatian, Cyprus, Czech, Estonian, French, Latvian, Maltese and Polish delegations*

### Agriculture

- b) **EU- Conference on digitalisation of agriculture** 13682/20  
**(organised by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture together with EURAGRI)**  
**(Potsdam (Germany), 2-3 December 2020)**  
*Information from the Presidency*

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the basis of document 13682/20 on the conference on digitalisation of agriculture, organised by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture together with the European Agricultural Research Initiative (EURAGRI) on 2-3 December 2020. The Council also took note of the Commission's comments on this subject.




- c) **48th conference of Directors of EU Paying Agencies (online, 8-9 October 2020)**  13794/20  
*Information from the Presidency*

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the basis of document 13794/20 on the 48th Conference of Directors of EU Paying Agencies, which took place in an online format on 8-9 October 2020. The Council also took note of the Commission's comments on this subject.




## **MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2020**

### **FISHERIES**

#### **Non-legislative activities**

3. **(continuation) Council Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea**  13850/20  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement* + ADD 1-2
4. **(continuation) Council Regulation fixing for 2021 and 2022 the fishing opportunities for certain deep-sea stocks**  13853/20  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement* 12126/20 + ADD 1
5. **(continuation) Council Regulation fixing for 2021 the fishing opportunities in the Mediterranean and Black Seas**  13292/20  
(Legal basis proposed by the Commission: Art. 43(3) TFEU)  
*Political agreement* 10154/20 + ADD 1

See page 4.

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-  First reading
-  Item based on a Commission proposal
-  Public debate proposed by the Presidency (Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure)
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Statements to the legislative "B" items set out in 13773/20

Ad "B" item 6:

**Conclusions on an EU-wide animal welfare label**

*Approval*

**STATEMENT BY ITALY**

"Italy would like to thank the German Presidency for the Council Conclusions on an EU-wide animal welfare label.

Italy acknowledges the high level of well-being already provided to farmed animals by the legislation in force in the European Union and regards the EU-wide label as an opportunity to further improve it and, at the same time, ensure a clearer information to consumers and promote a fairer compensation for producers.

Considering that the AW labelling must necessarily be based on requirements exceeding the mandatory ones set by the EU legislation, joining the labelling scheme must inevitably remain a voluntary choice for food business operators.

The AW labelling system should provide for the gradual inclusion of all farmed species and should ideally be referred to the entire lifetime of animals. Nonetheless, under specific circumstances, it could be more appropriate and proportionate to assess the conditions under which the animals have been kept for a significant part of their life.

Italy believes that animal welfare is deeply interconnected with other dimensions of animal husbandry that are mutually influenced, such as the health status of animals, the consumption of veterinary medicines and the biosecurity of farms. As a consequence of this relation, the comprehensive and simultaneous assessment of all these dimensions is deemed to be the most adequate basis to build a solid system to measure and improve the sustainability of livestock productions."

**STATEMENT BY THE CZECH REPUBLIC, GREECE AND ITALY**

"Czech Republic, Greece and Italy believe that the Presidency Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling fall short of reference to some of the principles that the afore-mentioned countries consider essential for the development of an EU-harmonized FOPNL scheme and that were enshrined in the Non paper co-presented with other Member States to last 21<sup>st</sup> September Agrifish council.

Czech Republic, Greece and Italy believe that Commission should address the need to encourage EU citizens to adopt a healthier lifestyle through a multidimensional approach, including the urgent launch of effective education campaigns.

In this framework, a EU harmonized FOPNL scheme must be a voluntary instrument to provide factual information on calories and individual nutrients contained in a food product, in full compliance with the requirements set by article 35 of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011. FOPNL are a tool to favour balanced diets, that is to help consumers choose food products according to their particular conditions and state of health, in line with the pledge "*to empower consumers to make informed, healthy and sustainable food choices*" stated in the Communication from the Commission "A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system". In this sense, a FOPNL scheme must neither be a marketing tool nor jeopardize traditional and high-quality productions. In this sense, Protected Designations of Origin, Protected Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialities guaranteed, as well as single ingredient products, will have to be exempted.

A EU harmonized FOPNL scheme has to be understandable and fully transparent. The use of colours is therefore not recommendable, since it would convey a simplistic message without shedding light on the underlying calculation used to attribute them.

A EU-harmonized FOPNL scheme should take into account the actual daily intake of foods and beverages, rather than a generic threshold of 100g/100ml, in order to avoid sending misleading messages, underestimating the contribution of food consumed in larger portions and penalizing those usually eaten in small quantities.



The coexistence between existing schemes and a future harmonized EU FOPNL scheme risks creating confusion and posing an unsustainable burden on industry, to the detriment of the internal market.

The decision on the development of such a scheme will have, over the next years, major implications on public health, the internal market and cultural values. It should therefore not be influenced by already established market-driven solutions."

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