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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>).
- 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**AGRICULTURE****Post-2020 common agricultural policy (CAP) reform package: environmental and climate-related aspects**

The Council exchanged views on the environmental and climate-related aspects of the CAP post 2020 on the basis of a presidency paper on ‘Environmental and climate-related aspects of the CAP – a common, ambitious and flexible green architecture’.

Ministers focused in particular on the presidency's suggestion that a single percentage or fixed amount of the overall CAP strategic plan budget be earmarked for environment and climate purposes (while maintaining ring-fencing for interventions in the fruit and vegetables schemes), in order to increase the environmental ambition and flexibility of the post-2020 CAP.

The common percentage or fixed amount would be set at a later stage, after a decision on the multiannual financial framework was taken, and only certain types of interventions would count towards it.

The presidency's proposal was welcomed by most delegations as a good basis for discussion. Some welcomed in particular the flexibility it would grant to member states.

Several ministers took the opportunity to restate that greater environmental and climate ambitions should be matched by an adequate CAP budget.

The Commission proposals

The reform package consists of three proposals, for:

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

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

The proposed CAP reform introduces a new delivery model that will allow member states more flexibility in the way they use EU funds and enable them to tailor-make their programmes. Each member state would have to draw up a strategic plan setting out how it intends to meet 9 EU-wide economic, environmental and social objectives while taking account of its own 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 would monitor progress towards achieving 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 compliance with 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 payment allocations.

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

Regulations on CAP transitional rules

The Commission presented its proposals for regulations on CAP transitional rules, which were broadly welcomed by ministers in the ensuing exchange of views.

Concerning the proposal laying down transitional provisions for EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) and EAGF (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) support in 2021, many delegations were in favour of a longer transition period which would also cover 2022. Some delegations also requested that existing transitional national aid be included in this regulation.

The proposals on CAP transitional rules were published on 31 October with the aim of providing certainty and continuity in the granting of support to European farmers and other beneficiaries before the new CAP enters into force.

The first proposal concerns financial discipline as from the 2021 financial year, as well as flexibility between pillars in respect of the year 2020. To this end, it amends the horizontal and direct payments regulations.

The second proposal lays down transitional provisions for 2021 and amends all four basic acts (direct payments, common market organisation, rural development and horizontal regulations), as well as regulations [228/2013](#) and [229/2013](#) on specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions and the smaller Aegean islands.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Increasing difficulties in the apiculture sector

The Hungarian delegation informed the Council about the problems currently faced by the apiculture sector in Europe. In particular it expressed worries about the long-term trend of bee mortality, highlighted by a recent study, and the profitability of the apiculture sector, and asked for urgent measures to protect domestic bees.

Many delegations supported the request to help the sector through measures including analysis and research, enhanced promotion and the inclusion of apiculture in the European Green Deal.

Rice imports from Myanmar

The Italian delegation provided information to the Council about the increasing imports of japonica rice from Myanmar. Italy also reiterated its request for close monitoring of the trend set by these imports and the resulting impact on the EU market and producers in order to assess whether the conditions for activating the safeguard clause are met.

Maize imports from Ukraine

The Polish delegation provided information on the increase in imports of maize from Ukraine and the negative impact they are having on the Polish cereal market. Poland, supported by several delegations, asked the Commission to analyse the situation and assess whether Ukraine applies EU standards for plant protection products in cereal production.

EU-China agreement on geographical indications

The Commission presented to the Council the bilateral agreement concluded by the EU and China on 6 November 2019 on the protection of 100 European geographical indications (GIs) in China and 100 Chinese GIs in the EU.

The list of European products to be protected in China includes GIs such as Cava, Champagne, Feta, Irish whiskey, Münchener Bier, Ouzo, Polska Wódka, Porto, Prosciutto di Parma and Queso Manchego. The list of Chinese products includes Pixian Dou Ban (Pixian bean paste), Anji Bai Cha (Anji white tea), Panjin Da Mi (Panjin rice) and Anqiu Da Jiang (Anqiu ginger).

In the ensuing debate, delegations recognised the importance of the agreement, which is expected to enter into force before the end of 2020.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FISHERIES

Protocol to amend the international convention for the conservation of Atlantic tunas (ICCAT)

The Council adopted a decision on the signing and provisional application of the protocol to amend the ICCAT ([13445/19](#)).

The Council also agreed in principle on the decision on the conclusion of the protocol ([13447/19](#)), and agreed to forward it, together with the text of the protocol ([13446/19](#)), to the European Parliament for its consent.

The protocol aims to amend the ICCAT to improve its effectiveness and strengthen the conservation and management of species under its purview. It is expected to be adopted at the 28th meeting of the ICCAT, on 18-25 November 2019 in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

Protocol on the implementation of the fisheries partnership agreement with Senegal

The Council adopted a decision on the signing on behalf of the EU and provisional application of the protocol on the implementation of the agreement on a sustainable fisheries partnership between the EU and the Republic of Senegal ([13477/19](#)).

The Council agreed in principle on the decision on the conclusion of the protocol ([13484/19](#)) and agreed to forward it, together with the protocol ([13483/19](#)), to the European Parliament for its consent.

Finally, the Council adopted a regulation on the allocation of fishing opportunities under the protocol on the implementation of the fisheries partnership ([13485/19](#)).

The protocol aims to implement the agreement on a sustainable fisheries partnership between the EU and the Republic of Senegal, given that the protocol currently in force will expire on 19 November 2019.

TRANSPORT

Civil global satellite navigation system (GNSS) – cooperation with Ukraine

The Council adopted a decision on signing an accession protocol to the cooperation agreement on a GNSS between the European Community and its member states and Ukraine in order to permit the inclusion of Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania in that agreement ([13800/19](#), [13318/19](#), [13343/19](#)).

Professional qualifications in inland navigation

The Council decided not to object to a Commission delegated directive supplementing directive 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation as regards the standards for competences and corresponding knowledge and skills, for the practical examinations, for the approval of simulators and for medical fitness ([13802/19](#); [11607/19](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

The directive is a delegated act pursuant to article 290 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the act can enter into force, unless the European Parliament objects to it.

INTERNAL MARKET AND INDUSTRY

Directive on cross-border conversions, mergers and divisions*

The Council approved the European Parliament's position at first-reading on a draft directive aimed at removing unjustified barriers to EU companies' freedom of establishment in the single market. The Estonian and UK delegations abstained.

The directive introduces comprehensive procedures for cross-border conversions and divisions and provides for additional rules on cross-border mergers of limited liability companies established in an EU member state.

The directive is therefore adopted in the wording which corresponds to the position of the European Parliament.

([PE-CONS 84/19](#), [13691/19](#) [ADD 1](#))

For more information, see [press release](#)

Amendment of regulation (EC) no 1907/2006 regarding the percentage of registration dossiers to be selected for compliance checking

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation (EC) no 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the percentage of registration dossiers to be selected for compliance checking ([12635/19](#)).

The regulation increases to at least 20% the percentage of registration dossiers to be selected by the European Chemicals Agency for checking compliance with the REACH regulation. The target of 20% should be achieved by 31 December 2023 for registrations in tonnage bands of 100 tonnes or more per year and by 31 December 2027 for registrations in tonnage bands of less than 100 tonnes per year.

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

EU POSITIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) – coordination

The Council approved an information note and endorsed the recommended EU positions contained in it, so that the information note can be used as the basis for interventions by the representatives of the EU member states which are members of the ICAO Council at its 218th session, which will take place in Montreal on 18-29 November 2019. The note covers the areas of strategic objectives, aviation security and facilitation, as well as environmental protection.

The EU's position within the ACP-EU committee of ambassadors

The Council adopted the position of the European Union within the ACP-EU committee of ambassadors regarding the adoption of transitional measures pursuant to article 95(4) of the ACP-EU partnership agreement. These are transitional measures that are necessary until a new agreement is finalised and comes into force.

The ACP-EU partnership agreement, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000, is the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the EU. It has been the framework for EU's relations with 79 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP).

[ACP-EU partnership agreement](#)

The EU's position in the economic partnership agreement (EPA) committee – adoption of rules and code of conduct

The Council adopted the position of the European Union in the EPA committee with a view to concluding an EPA between the EU and Cameroon. The EPA committee will adopt a decision establishing the rules of procedure for mediation, the rules of procedure for arbitration and the code of conduct for arbitrators.

EPAs are trade and development agreements negotiated between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners engaged in regional economic integration processes.

[Overview of EPAs](#)

The EU's position in the EPA committee – adoption of the list of arbitrators

The Council adopted the position of the European Union in the EPA committee with a view to an EPA between the EU and Cameroon. The EPA committee will establish the list of individuals who are willing and able to serve as arbitrators.

EPAs are trade and development agreements negotiated between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners engaged in regional economic integration processes.

[Overview of EPAs](#)
