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President **Roderick Galdes**
Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries, and
Animal rights

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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

Multi-annual plan for small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea

The Commission presented its proposal establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea.

The objective of the proposal is to introduce for the first time a comprehensive and effective management framework to address the problem of overexploitation of stocks such as sardines and anchovies, as well as mackerel and horse mackerel (by-catches). The plan will apply to all EU fishing vessels, whether or not they fish in the Adriatic Sea and - where the figures are available - will include ranges of fishing mortality levels on the basis of which the Council will set annual catch limits. In line with the multi-annual plan for the Baltic Sea, the proposal for the Adriatic incorporates safeguard measures to restore stocks when they fall below safe biological limits. It also contains measures for the implementation of the landing obligation and gives scope for regional cooperation.

In the exchange of views that followed the presentation, delegations generally welcomed the proposal but highlighted some concerns, in particular about the potential socio-economic impact of the plan on small-scale fisheries and the inclusion of disproportionate control measures. Most delegations called for an approach that took full account of the specificities of the Adriatic Sea, and does not hamper the fishing sector in the area.

AGRICULTURE

The Common Agricultural Policy post-2020

The Council had an exchange of views on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

In particular, ministers shared ideas on how the priorities of the future CAP can be achieved, and on whether or not there should be a rebalancing of direct support and rural development.

Most delegations asked for adequate funding for the future CAP, which will have to face a variety of challenges including market volatility, climate change and pressure on resources.

Simplification was generally highlighted as an overall priority for future policies in order to release the full economic potential of EU farming and rural areas. Other issues identified as priorities were: building resilience, responding to environmental challenges, investing in rural viability and vitality, ensuring generational renewal, maintaining a market orientation and strengthening farmers' position in the food chain. The issue of risk management was touched on by several delegations which expressed the need for a more robust response to market crises, including in the form of countercyclical measures. Innovation was also mentioned as both a priority and a tool to face future challenges.

As regards the pillar structure of the CAP, most delegations confirmed that it was a valid structure. Some delegations were in favour of putting more emphasis on rural development in the future in order to invest in rural viability and vitality, whilst others warned against a reduction of direct support to farmers.

Concerning direct payments some delegations asked for their progressive harmonisation in all EU member states, in order to achieve a real level playing field in the EU. Several delegations also called on the Commission to maintain, and possibly even strengthen, voluntary coupled support.

Although several delegations found it was too early to consider a rebalancing of the financial resources allocated to pillar I and pillar II, many called for real flexibility between pillars at member-state level.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

– *'Our Ocean' 2017 Conference, Malta, 5 and 6 October 2017*

The Commission informed the Council about the fourth international 'Our Ocean' Conference that will be hosted by the EU in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017.

The global, high-level conference is intended to bring about new, concrete and measurable commitments by both the public and the private sector and track progress on the delivery of commitments made at previous 'Our Ocean' conferences.

The fourth 'Our Ocean' Conference will focus on four themes: marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean. Furthermore the blue economy and maritime security will be included in the themes to be discussed. Special emphasis will be placed on the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

– *Animal welfare platform*

The Commission reported on the latest developments in the setting-up of the EU Platform on animal welfare.

The platform, set up on 24 January 2017, aims to bring together relevant stakeholders and public entities in order to promote Union standards on animal welfare, encourage dialogue between them as well as share best practices, scientific knowledge and policy developments in this field. On 30 January 2017 the Commission launched a call for applications to select the platform's 75 members. The first meeting of the platform will be held during the Maltese presidency on 6 June in Brussels and the second is planned for November 2017.

Delegations welcomed the setting-up of the platform and considered it was an important forum to facilitate constructive discussion and move efforts forward in the field of animal welfare. Some delegations said they would actively contribute to the work of the platform.

– *Lumpy skin disease*

The Croatian delegation informed ministers about the preventive measures that the Republic of Croatia put in place to deal with the outbreaks of lumpy skin disease in the neighbouring countries, namely the preventive vaccination of the entire cattle population.

Croatia also called on the Commission to consider compensation for the costs and losses it incurred, and to consider amending decision 2016/2008 to include an 'exit' strategy for the movement of vaccinated cattle within the EU when vaccination ceases.

Several delegations expressed gratitude for the Croatian efforts and sympathy for its request for compensation. They generally also supported amending the current rules to include an 'exit' strategy.

The Commission showed openness to the Croatian requests but clarified that compensation for indirect losses was under the responsibility of the Commissioner for agriculture.

– *Dual quality of foodstuffs*

On the initiative of the Slovak, Czech and Hungarian delegations, ministers were briefed on the issue of food products sold in different EU countries (often from the same producer) with the same name and packaging, but which have a different level of quality, taste and ingredients depending to the country. In particular, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia shared the results of a series of tests carried out on cases of dual quality of foodstuffs and asked the Commission to consider appropriate action including legislation at EU level, if needed.

Several delegations supported the Slovak, Czech and Hungarian concerns and requests. Although delegations highlighted that these products are often safe and labelled in conformity with EU law, they also warned against this practice potentially misleading the consumers and creating unfair competition.

The Commission expressed sympathy for the Slovak, Czech and Hungarian concerns and committed to follow up on the situation. It called on member states to communicate instances of dual quality of foodstuffs to the relevant national authorities and the Commission itself. It also explained that work on the issue would continue in the context of the consumer protection cooperation network and in the high-level forum for a better functioning food supply chain.

– ***Better functioning of the food supply chain***

The Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Slovak and Slovenian delegations presented their non-paper on 'Better functioning of the Food Supply Chain: addressing unfair trade practices (UTPs) and improving the position of farmers' ([6808/17](#)). They called on the Commission to establish an EU legislative framework to regulate UTPs and to define additional tools needed for strengthening the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

Several delegations supported the request, whilst others said they preferred an approach based on voluntary national initiatives, and wanted to wait and fully assess the potential effects of new legislation in the area, before taking concrete steps in this direction.

– ***G20 agriculture ministers' conference, Berlin, 22 January 2017***

The German delegation reported on the outcome of the meeting of the G20 agriculture ministers, which took place in Berlin in January 2017 and focused on the following three issues: water, antibiotics and digitisation. On the occasion of that meeting, ministers adopted a declaration and action plan both of which are entitled: "Towards food and water security: Fostering sustainability, advancing innovation".

– ***EU solidarity corps***

The Commission informed the Council about the European solidarity corps and the available opportunities for volunteer work, in particular, under the Common Agricultural Policy, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and LIFE, the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU.

The European Solidarity Corps was launched on 7 December 2016, and is an initiative that allows young people to participate in a wide range of activities to show their solidarity in practice through either volunteering or employment, traineeships or apprenticeships, while helping to tackle challenges across Europe.

The fields include activities of general interest such as education, health, integration of migrants and refugees, provision of food, environmental protection, prevention of natural disasters, as well as agricultural and rural areas.

– ***Market difficulties in the Polish fruit sector***

The Polish delegation expressed its concerns about the market situation in the fruit sector, affected by the continued embargo introduced by the Russian Federation on the import of certain agricultural products originating in the European Union. In order to address the difficulties currently faced by its farmers, Poland requested to amend Commission delegated regulation no 2016/921 as regards the quantity of apples and pears allocated to Poland.

The Polish request was supported by a number of delegations.

The Commission explained that it had already granted significant support to the Polish fruit and vegetables sector since the beginning of the Russian embargo. It also said that it was about to propose a rollover for temporary exceptional measures for certain fruits after 1 July 2017 and that a measure to reallocate an unused reserve under the current exceptional measures had recently entered into force.

– ***Voluntary coupled support***

The Bulgarian, Croatian, Cyprus, Czech, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian and Slovenian delegations presented their note concerning the implementation of voluntary coupled support. In particular, they expressed concerns about the Commission scrutiny of national decisions and its impact on the effective implementation of voluntary coupled support measures. They also asked for more flexibility allowing member states to target sectors in need according to their national strategy.

A few more delegations supported the request, whilst others expressed misgivings on relaxing Commission controls on voluntary coupled support.

– *Forum on the EU rice sector, Milan, 20 February 2017*

The Italian delegation briefed ministers on the outcome of the first forum on the EU rice sector, which took place in Milan on 20 February 2017, and gathered more than 50 participants representing the main rice-producing countries, as well as European sectorial organisations such as COPA, the Union of Rice Farmers and the Federation of European Rice Millers.

The Italian delegation also drew the attention of the Council to the increase in rice imports at zero duty from EBA (Everything but arms) countries and the issue of continued liberalisation of rice imports within bilateral agreements.

The Italian initiative was supported by some delegations. The Commission committed to keep monitoring the situation of rice imports and explained that member states could help their rice sectors face market difficulties using voluntary coupled support and the promotion scheme.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

AGRICULTURE

Methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of feed: levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation amending regulation (EC) no 152/2009 as regards the methods for the determination of the levels of dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls ([5442/17](#)).

Commission regulation (EC) no 152/2009 lays down the methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of feed and thus includes methods for the determination of the levels of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDDs), polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs), dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and non-dioxin-like PCBs in feed.

The EU reference laboratory for dioxins and PCBs in feed and food has provided evidence that analytical results for dioxins and PCBs are not reliable in certain cases. It was therefore decided to amend regulation (EC) no 152/2009 to improve the reliability of these results.

This 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 them, unless the European Parliament objects.

Pesticides - maximum residue levels

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a series of Commission regulations amending Annexes II, III and V of regulation no 396/2005 as regards maximum residue levels (MRLs) for

- acequinocyl, amitraz, coumaphos, diflufenican, flumequine, metribuzin, permethrin, pyraclostrobin and streptomycin ([5073/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))
- bifenazate, daminozide and tolylfluanid ([5441/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))
- fenpyroximate, triadimenol and triadimefon ([5455/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))

- acetamiprid, cyantraniliprole, cypermethrin, cyprodinil, difenoconazole, ethephon, fluopyram, flutriafol, fluxapyroxad, imazapic, imazapyr, lambda-cyhalothrin, mesotrione, profenofos, propiconazole, pyrimethanil, spirotetramat, tebuconazole, triazophos and trifloxystrobin ([5396/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))
- bitertanol, chlormequat and tebufenpyrad ([5617/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))
- clothianidin and thiamethoxam ([5613/17](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#))

in or on certain products.

Regulation 396/2005 establishes the MRLs permitted in products of animal or vegetable origin intended for human or animal consumption. These MRLs include, on the one hand, levels which are specific to particular foodstuffs intended for human or animal consumption and, on the other, a general limit which applies where no specific level 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 to establish a new MRL or to amend or remove an existing MRL and modifying the annexes of regulation no 396/2005 accordingly.

Transformation of animal by-products into biogas or compost

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of two Commission regulations amending regulation (EU) no 142/2011 as regards the definitions of fishmeal and fish oil ([5664/17](#) + [ADD 1](#)); nor did it oppose an alternative method for processing certain rendered fats ([5650/17](#) + [ADD 1](#)).

Regulation (EU) no 142/2011 lays down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption, in order to prevent and minimise risks to public and animal health arising from those products.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Europol

The Council endorsed Europol's work programme for 2017 ([5823/17](#)) and will forward it to the European Parliament for information.

The work programme is Europol's annual business plan. This report is prepared each year by Europol's Management Board, as required by the Council decision establishing the European Police Office.

INTERNAL MARKET

Type-approval of motor vehicles

- Worldwide harmonised light-duty vehicles test procedures

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption by the Commission of a regulation laying down technical measures for the implementation of regulation 715/2007 on type-approval of motor vehicles with respect to emissions from light passenger and commercial vehicles (Euro 5 and Euro 6) and on access to vehicle repair and maintenance information ([5365/17](#) + [ADD 1-8](#)).

The Commission regulation is aimed at implementing the Worldwide harmonised Light-duty vehicles Test Procedures (WLTP) into EU legislation.

The WLTP are developed in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). They will provide stricter test conditions and more realistic CO²/fuel consumption values.

The new Commission regulation also amends annexes to the framework directive 2007/46/EC for the type-approval of motor vehicles, as well as Commission regulation no 692/2008 and regulation no 1230/2012.

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

- UNECE technical prescriptions

The Council adopted a [decision](#) aimed at supporting certain amendments to UN regulations of the agreement of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) concerning the adoption of uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, which need to be adapted to reflect technical progress.

The decision includes support for a proposal on draft guidelines on cyber security and data protection.

[UNECE](#) develops harmonised requirements intended to remove technical barriers to the trade in motor vehicles between the contracting parties of the agreement. The EU is a contracting party to this agreement and votes on behalf of the member states.