



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10302/06 (Presse 178)

PRESS RELEASE

2739th Council Meeting

Agriculture and Fisheries

Luxembourg, 19 June 2006

President

Mr Josef PRÖLL

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the Environment
and Water Management
of Austria

P R E S S

Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 9589 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026
press.office@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

10302/06 (Presse 178)

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Main Results of the Council

*The Council adopted a Regulation on a **European Fisheries Fund (EFF) 2007-2013** with an overall financial framework of EUR 3.85 billion.*

*The Council held a public debate on **animal welfare**.*

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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.
- The documents whose 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 abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Ms Sabine LARUELLE

Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed and Agriculture

Czech Republic:

Mr Jan MLÁDEK

Minister for Agriculture

Denmark:

Ms Lene ESPERSEN

Mr Anders MIKKELSEN

Minister for Justice

State Secretary, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

Germany:

Mr Gert LINDEMANN

State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Estonia:

Ms Ester TUIKSOO

Minister for Agriculture

Greece:

Mr Evangelos BASIAKOS

Minister for Rural Development and Food

Spain:

Ms Elena ESPINOSA MANGANA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

France:

Mr Dominique BUSSEREAU

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

Ireland:

Ms Mary COUGHLAN

Minister for Agriculture and Food

Italy:

Mr Paolo DE CASTRO

Mr Giampaolo PATTA

Minister for Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policy

State Secretary for Health

Cyprus:

Mr Fotis FOTIOU

Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

Latvia:

Mr Mārtiņš ROZE

Minister for Agriculture

Lithuania:

Mr Jonas KONDROTAS

Deputy Minister for Agriculture

Luxembourg:

Mr Fernand BODEN

Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, Minister for Small and Medium-sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed, Tourism and Housing
State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research

Ms Octavie MODERT

Hungary:

Mr József GRÁF

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

Malta:

Mr George PULLICINO

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Netherlands:

Mr Cees VEERMAN

Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

Austria:

Mr Josef PRÖLL

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the
Environment and Water Management
Director-General, Federal Ministry for Agriculture,
Forestry, the Environment and Water Management

Mr Andrä RUPPRECHTER

Poland:

Mr Andrzej LEPPER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Agriculture and Rural
Development**Portugal:**

Mr Jaime SILVA

Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries

Slovenia:

Ms Marija LUKAČIČ

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food

Slovakia:

Mr Juraj NOCIAR

Deputy Permanent Representative

Finland:

Mr Juha KORKEAOJA

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry

Sweden:

Ms Ann-Christin NYKVIST

Minister for Agriculture with responsibility for Consumer
Affairs**United Kingdom:**

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural
Affairs

.....

Commission:

Ms Mariann FISCHER BOEL

Member

Mr Joe BORG

Member

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Member

.....

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Mr Roussi IVANOV

Deputy Head of Mission

Romania:

Mr Mugur CRĂCIUN

Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and
Rural Development

ITEMS DEBATED

FORESTS

The Council took note of the presentation by Commissioner Fischer-Boel of a Communication (10448/06) on an EU Forest Action Plan, and held a first exchange of views on the subject. Commissioner Fischer-Boel noted in particular that there were at present 15 million forests owners and that 3,4 million jobs were directly or indirectly related to forestry management. The Finnish delegation stated its intention of tabling conclusions on this issue under its forthcoming Presidency.

In general, a large majority of delegations could support the objectives and the key actions proposed in the Communication. Some delegations insisted on the need to support a larger use of wood as a source of renewable energy, and stressed the multifunctional role of forests.

The Communication was adopted following the Council's request¹ that the Commission present an EU Forest Action Plan in 2006, and on the basis of a Council Resolution of 1998 on forestry strategy in the EU.

The five-year Action Plan (2007–2011) consists of a set of eighteen key actions which the Commission proposes to implement jointly with the Member States, and which are structured around four objectives:

- improving long-term competitiveness, by encouraging research, promoting the exchange of experience, the use of forest biomass for energy purposes, and improving cooperation and training;
- improving and protecting the environment, by improving the EU's compliance with international requirements (Kyoto Protocol), and the creation of a European Forest Monitoring Programme to replace the current Forest Focus which will end in 2006;
- contributing to the quality of life, in particular by working with local communities in planning, creating, managing and using urban and peri-urban forests;

¹ Council Conclusions on an EU Forest Action Plan, 2662nd meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 30 and 31 May 2005.

- encouraging coordination and communication, by strengthening the role of the Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) with a yearly work programme, joint meetings between the members of the SFC and the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork¹, as well as with other consultative bodies such as the Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forestry-based Industries², and encouraging the use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests.

A mid-term assessment will take place in 2009 and a final assessment will be carried out in 2012. The Action Plan also identifies additional actions which can be carried out by the Member States according to their specific conditions and priorities, with support from existing Community instruments, although implementation may also require national instruments.

¹ Decision 2004/391/EC (OJ L 120, 24.4.2004, p. 50).

² Decision 97/837/EC (OJ L 346, 17.12.1997, p. 95).

WTO NEGOTIATIONS

The Council was informed by Commissioner Fischer-Boel, and held an exchange of views on the latest state of play and prospects for the negotiations at the World Trade Organisation. The Presidency concluded by confirming the Council's support for the Commission in its efforts to negotiate a comprehensive balanced and ambitious WTO agreement in accordance with the mandate it received from the Council, took note of the Council conclusions of 12 June and stressed the need for unity.

At the GAERC on 12 June the Council adopted its conclusions on the WTO negotiations¹.

It is recalled that the EU presented its last-conditional offer on agriculture and NAMA on 28 October 2005².

¹ See: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/90011.pdf

² For further details of that offer see:
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/400> and
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1358>

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

By a qualified majority, the Cypriot delegation voting against, the Council adopted a Decision laying down the amount of Community support (EUR 69,75 billion) for rural development for the period 2007-2013, its annual breakdown and the minimum amount to be concentrated in regions eligible under the convergence objective (EUR 27.699 billion) (10016/06). The Council also agreed to record in its minutes that the allocation key of the remaining rural development funds proposed by the Commission has been agreed by the Council.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The Council held an exchange of views on the Communication on animal welfare (5734/06+ADD1). The Council also took note of the Presidency conclusions which summarise the main points of concern that emerged from a Conference on animal welfare held in Brussels on 30 March 2006. At that conference, representatives of the Member States, of the European Institutions, international parties and a wide range of stakeholders representing the whole of the food chain discussed the Communication, which mainly covers the welfare of animals kept for food production. **The debate was broadcast to the public.**

The Presidency conclusions insist in particular on the setting up of a European network of scientific institutes and laboratories responsible for questions relating to animal welfare, and stress the need for an impact assessment and that the need to legislate must be based on the results of sound scientific studies which demonstrate necessity and feasibility. Objective and measurable indicators on animal welfare are also considered a high priority. It is also envisaged that the Commission will investigate possible options for an animal-welfare labelling scheme at EU level. Finally, the conclusions support the mutual recognition of animal welfare worldwide on the basis of multilateral standards.

The Communication outlines the Commission's intentions regarding future animal welfare initiatives.

On 20 February the Council held a first exchange of views on the Communication on the basis of a questionnaire (*see 6083/06*). During that exchange of views, a majority of delegations insisted on the need to check the socio-economic impact on producers and consumers before any amendment of the existing minimum requirements; several Member States agreed on the need for a sound-scientific basis for updating the existing minimum requirements; several delegations were in favour of an information campaign in order to inform farmers, retailers and consumers better on existing Community animal-welfare rules and on their application.

At the Council on 23 January, Commissioner Kyprianou presented the Community Action Plan on the Protection and Welfare of Animals for the period 2006-2010, and indicated that would:

- try to upgrade animal welfare on the basis of scientific standards;
- aim at informing citizens better;
- support initiatives on the issue of animal welfare in international fora, such as the WTO;
- try to set indicators and benchmarks to determine the level of animal welfare;
- encourage research in that sector.

BROILERS

The Council took note of the report presented by the Presidency (10287/06) on a draft Directive (see 9606/05+ADD1) laying down minimum rules for the protection of chickens kept for meat production (broilers) and of the comments made at that stage by several delegations mainly concerning the implementing period, the issue of collecting data before the establishment of an upper compulsory limit, the need for a report on the socio-economic impact on the sector of the measures envisaged, and the issue of sanctions. The Council noted that the suggested work plan had the support of a majority of the delegations and gave the Committee of Permanent Representatives a mandate to continue work on that basis, at the appropriate level, with a view to reaching a conclusion during the Finnish Presidency.

The main suggestions drawn up by the Presidency (10287/06) broadly consist of extending the scope of the proposal to cover organic and free-range chickens and envisaging the possible setting up of an upper compulsory limit -to be defined- for stocking density to be presented by the Commission, after a period during which data would be collected at national level on harmonised standards of welfare (mortality rate, stocking density, footpad lesions, etc.). That upper limit would apply with enhanced welfare requirements. The initial minimum threshold of 30 kg live per square metre for stocking density remains.

The proposal was presented by Commissioner Kyprianou at the Council in July 2005 (see 10817/05). Since then, the Working Party of Veterinary Experts has met several times under the United Kingdom and the Austrian Presidencies, and the last report was submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) on 7 June 2006. The Special Committee on Agriculture also discussed the socio-economic aspects of the proposal (7522/06).

The draft Directive sets out a basic stocking density of 30 kg live animals per square metre as well as a number of minimum conditions to ensure animal welfare. Farmers must ensure appropriate access to litter, drinkers and feed as well as proper ventilation. Buildings must have a certain amount of light and there must be at least two daily inspections. Any chickens that are seriously injured or in poor health must be treated or culled immediately. Those minimum standards are supplemented by detailed record-keeping requirements on issues such as house temperatures, medical treatment administered and mortality rates. Farms that meet enhanced welfare conditions will be allowed to stock up to 38 kg/m² as long as inspections at slaughter continue to prove that the animals have not suffered particular welfare problems. The European Parliament delivered its Opinion on 14 February 2006.

OTHER BUSINESS

– *Land, Life, Future of European Farmers*

The Council took note of the Presidency conclusions (10479/06) on Land, Life, Future of European Farmers -following the discussion of those issues at the informal meeting of the ministers in Krems (Austria, 28-30 May 2006).

– *United Nations Forum on Forests*

The Council took note of the written information (9949/06) provided by the Austrian Presidency concerning the sixth session of the United Nations Forum on forests.

– *Avian Influenza H5N1*

Commissioner Kyprianou gave the Council **a written update on the latest developments concerning identified cases of H5N1 strain avian influenza in the world and in the European Union. At present the H5N1 virus** had been found in wild birds in thirteen Member States (Greece, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom), and in commercial flocks in five Member States (France, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Hungary). On 9 June Hungary informed the Commission of a possible case of H5N1 strain avian influenza in a commercial holding in the South (Bacs-Kiskun) and of the elimination of 2300 breeding geese. A total of 400 000 poultry have been killed and destroyed. Romania has reported 130 confirmed outbreaks in eighteen counties since mid-May. A proposal to extend the import ban on Romanian live poultry and poultry products to the whole country has been endorsed by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, on the basis that the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus has been spreading rapidly in Romania since avian influenza began re-occurring in the country in mid-May. The measures will be reviewed in July 2006.

– *UN Universal declaration on animal welfare*

The Council took note of written information (10472/06) provided by the Czech delegation concerning the draft of a Universal Declaration on animal welfare. The purpose of the Declaration is to recognise animals as sensitive beings, which feel pain and stress, at global level. Animal welfare should thus be recognised as a part of the social development of world nations. The Declaration is a means of improving animals' living conditions in all countries in general. The draft Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare is to be discussed in order to achieve intergovernmental agreement on the Declaration text for eventual submission to the meeting of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) to be held in New York in July 2007.

– *Sugar*

The Latvian delegation drew the attention of the Council and the Commission to the problems arising out of the Regulation adopted by the Commission on 8 June 2006¹ laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 320/2006² establishing a temporary scheme for the restructuring of the sugar industry in the Community (*see 10520/06*).

According to the Latvian delegation, the Commission Regulation, which will apply from 1 July 2006:

- imposes on undertakings, ceasing sugar production as a result of the sugar sector reform, abnormal obligations which could force them to stop sugar production without being able to participate in the restructuring scheme; among those obligations, the Regulation provides that the payment of each instalment (a first instalment of 40% and a second of 60%) of the restructuring aid -of EUR 730 a tonne during the marketing years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008- shall be subject to the lodging of a security of an amount equal to 120% of the instalment concerned;
- gives, according to its Article 12(2), an erroneous interpretation of Article 3(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 concerning the restructuring aid to be granted in respect of the marketing year for which the quotas are renounced. The Latvian delegation indicated in particular that the restructuring aid is to be granted in respect of the marketing year for which the quotas are renounced irrespective of whether any financial resources in the restructuring fund are available or not.

The Latvian delegation accordingly asked the Commission and the Council to take the steps necessary to ensure that the rules for implementation of the Regulation on the restructuring scheme are fully in line with the agreements reached.

The Netherlands delegation expressed understanding for the Latvian request and asked the Commission to demonstrate greater flexibility in taking account of the concern expressed by the Latvian delegation. While insisting on the need for proper security to ensure that all conditions are met by the beneficiary of restructuring aid, the Netherlands delegation noted, however, that the requirement was so severe that it was impossible for some firms to comply with.

¹ Not yet published in the Official Journal.

² OJ L 58, 28.2.2006, p.42.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel indicated that the lodging of a security equal to 120% of one of the two instalments (40% first and 60% at a later stage) was intended to provide an incentive for firms to restructure their activity on the basis of a business plan in the most efficient manner and to ensure that the money would be properly spent. As regards the issue of the withdrawal or postponement of a restructuring application (Article 12), she indicated that the granting of restructuring aid was subject to renunciation of the quota.

– ***Poultry and eggs sector***

The French, Greek and Italian delegations, supported by a large majority of delegations, asked the Commission to extend the scope of the current Council Regulation (EC) No 679/2006 on the application of exceptional market support measures in the poultry and eggs sectors to the downstream part of the poultry and eggs industry -slaughterhouses and warehouses- affected by the loss of confidence on the part of consumers, and not to restrict that support to the egg producers and poultry breeders; it suggested the co-financing of aid in order to eliminate the surpluses on the market, to cover the storage costs of poultry and the destruction of stocks (*see 10646/06, 10647/06*). Those delegations also requested the extension, until the end of July, of the financing of the current measures for compensating producers following the disturbances on the European poultry and eggs markets, which ended in April.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel indicated, as regards the extension of the scope of Commission Regulation (EC) No 679/2006, that her services were analysing of the situation on the market and that a Regulation would be presented at the meeting of the Management Committee for Poultry meat and Eggs on 21 June. However, she made clear that priority should be given to addressing the problems in the upstream part of the sector rather than in the downstream part. Although she did not deny the fact that the industry was currently accumulating stocks of poultry, she noted that it was not eligible for market support.

She also emphasised that the industry should benefit from the good prospects for exports and from the increased export refunds granted in the sector¹ to get rid of the surpluses rapidly. Finally, she noted that as there were no serious market disturbances, there was no justification for the extension of the period for compensating producers for their losses. She said, however, that her services were prepared to look at the various requests made by Member States.

¹ At the Management Committee on 17 May, export refunds were increased by EUR 5/100 kg for whole broilers and for chicken cuts. See :

<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/minco/manco/poultry/760.pdf>

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FISHERIES

European Fisheries Fund (EFF)

By a qualified majority, with the Belgian and the Polish delegations abstaining, the Council adopted a political agreement on the proposal for a Regulation on a European Fisheries Fund (EFF), on the basis of a Presidency compromise endorsed by the Commission (*see 10529/06 + ADD1 + ADD2*). Negotiations on the EFF failed twice previously, in June 2005 and May 2006. The legal text will then be finalised by the Legal/linguistic experts. This adoption will provide the fishermen and the stakeholders in the fishing sector with a stable financial framework for the period 2007-2013. The implementing regulations are likely to be discussed from July to October 2006, so that the provisions can be implemented as soon as possible.

The key changes made by the agreement on the EFF are:

- Scope of the Regulation (Article 1) : Community support is extended to inland fishing and fisheries areas;
- The objectives of the Fund (Article 4) now include promotion of the sustainable development of inland fishing;
- The financial amounts allocated to the EFF have been reduced from EUR 4.96 billion to roughly EUR 3.85 billion following agreement on the draft on the financial perspectives;
- Extension of the scope of axis 1: the scope of the support of the Fund (Article 21) is extended to public aid in the framework of rescue and restructuring plans for firms finding themselves in difficulty, in accordance with Community guidelines on the subject; the scope also covers public aid on account of the temporary cessation of fishing activities for fishermen and the owners of fishing vessels for a maximum period of six months during the period 2007-2013, in the event of natural disasters, the closure of fisheries decided on by Member States for reasons of public health or other exceptional occurrences which are not the result of resource-conservation measures;

- Investment on board fishing vessels and selectivity covers the possibility of financing for the replacement of engines (Article 24) provided that it does not increase the fishing capacity: the Fund may contribute to the financing of the replacement of engines on fishing vessels -which was not initially provided for in the draft Regulation- provided the new engines have the same power or less in the case of small scale coastal vessels (12 metres or below), or that the new engines have at least 20% less power than the old ones in the case of vessels between 12 metres and 24 metres in length, or that they have at least 20% less power than the old ones and the vessels are subject to rescue and restructuring plans, and changes to less-fuel intensive methods in the case of trawlers more than 24 metres in length; initially the draft Regulation included only indicative figures for the financing of environmentally-friendly equipment and fishing gear;
- Aid for young fishermen (Article 26): the Fund may grant premiums to fishermen less than forty years old who can prove they have worked at least five years as fishermen or have equivalent professional training and who acquire for the first time a vessel less than 24 metres in length and between five and thirty years old. The premium must not exceed 15% of the cost of acquisition of the vessel nor exceed EUR 50 000. This measure is new as the initial draft provided for support only for training measures and training incentives for young fishermen;
- Investment aid in axis 2 (Article 28: aquaculture, inland fishing processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products): investment aid is now extended to medium-sized firms -instead of just micro and small businesses as in the proposal- and firms with less than 750 employees or with turnovers of less than EUR 200 million. Outermost regions and the outlying Greek Islands are exempt from these requirements;
- Aid intensity (see Annex): Community financial participation has been merged with the public participation of the Member State concerned, simplifying the table on aid intensity and increasing the overall public contribution;
- Balance of fleet entries/exits: a joint statement from the Council and the Commission allows the reintroduction into the fleet of 4% (instead of 3%) of tonnage corresponding to exits from the fleet since 1 January 2007 in the reference period 2003-2006. However, Member States will be able to allocate this tonnage only for the purpose of improving safety, hygiene, working conditions and product quality on board vessels. Priority must be given to smaller vessels;
- Public aid for fishing vessels in the outermost regions permitted until 31 December 2006 (one year).

The EFF created for the period 2007-2013 will contribute to the necessary reduction of fishing capacities. The Fund will also help to restructure the sector by means of socio-economic measures in order to limit the impact of declining fishing activities.

The proposal was presented by the Commission on 14 July 2004.

The Fund will intervene on five different axes:

- Axis 1 : Measures for the adaptation of the Community fleet such as aid for the owners of fishing vessels who temporarily cease their fishing activities in the framework of recovery plans; investment on board fishing vessels, small-scale coastal fishing;
- Axis 2 : Aquaculture, inland fishing processing and marketing : measures for productive investments in aquaculture, aqua-environmental measures, compensation to mollusc farmers for the temporary suspension of farmed mollusc harvesting when linked to public health issues , support for investment in inland fishing facilities;
- Axis 3 : Measures of common interest: support for collective actions;
- Axis 4 : Sustainable development of fisheries areas, targeting areas with low population density, fishing in decline or small fisheries communities;
- Axis 5 : Technical assistance (evaluations, expert reports, studies, etc).

The Fund will have a financial envelope of EUR 3.85 billion under the agreement on the financial perspectives between the three Institutions. The European Parliament delivered its Opinion on 6 July 2005.

AGRICULTURE

Alpine Convention - Protocol on mountain farming

The Council adopted a Decision approving the conclusion of a protocol on mountain farming attached to the Alpine Convention, aimed at promoting environmentally friendly agriculture in the Alpine region (10052/06).

Marketing standards for poultry meat

The Council adopted a Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 1906/90 on certain marketing standards for poultry meat (9434/06).

Regulation (EEC) No 1906/90, which contains several references to Community veterinary legislation, is amended in particular in order to adapt the references to the corresponding provisions in the new hygiene regulations, as well as other references which are no longer accurate.

The Regulation will enter into force on the seventh day after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

Marketing standards for eggs *

The Council adopted a Regulation laying down the conditions of marketing within the EU of the eggs produced in the EU or imported from third countries (9433/06, 10282/06 ADD1).

The Member States have the possibility of exempting from the requirements of the Regulation eggs sold through certain forms of direct sale by the producer to the final consumer where small quantities are involved.

The Regulation distinguishes two quality classes of eggs: class A, fresh eggs for direct human consumption, and class B, eggs for use in the food or non-food industry.

The Member States will appoint inspection services to check compliance with the Regulation and lay down rules on penalties applicable to infringements.

The Regulation will apply from 1 July 2007 and it repeals Regulation (EEC) No 1907/90.

Flax and hemp

By a qualified majority, the Council adopted a regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1673/2000 on the common organisation of the markets in flax and hemp grown for fibre and Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 as regards hemp eligible under the single payment scheme (9870/06). The Czech delegation abstained.

The aim of the Regulation is to extend until the end of the 2007/2008 marketing year the processing aid for short flax fibre and hemp fibre (EUR 90/tonne) and for long flax fibre (EUR 160 a tonne for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, and EUR 200 a tonne for 2008/2009 onwards).

The Regulation also provides for the extension of transitional additional aid (from EUR 50/hectare to EUR 120/hectare depending on the different regions) in certain regions of the Netherlands, Belgium and France until the 2007/2008 marketing year, in order to continue making the gradual adaptation of farm structures to the new market conditions possible.

It also makes the cultivation of hemp for other industrial uses eligible for the single payment scheme, as well as a hemp grown for fibre.

It will apply from the date of its entry into force (1 July 2006), with the exception of Article 2 (production of hemp), which will apply from 1 January 2007.

Forest Law Enforcement , Governance and Trade (FLEGT) - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. REITERATING the EU's firm commitment to contribute to the sustainable management of the world's forests;
2. NOTING the need for action-oriented cooperation among countries, as well as effective participation of stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable forest management including the need for collaborative action to combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption;

- 3 RECALLING the EU's Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and the recent adoption of a Council Regulation¹ on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community;
- 4 ACKNOWLEDGING the great value of regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) processes co-organised by the World Bank, in order to address the complex and urgent issue of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption;
5. WELCOMING the outcome of the Europe and North Asia (ENA) FLEG Ministerial Conference which took place in St. Petersburg from 22 to 25 November 2005, bringing together nearly 300 participants from 48 countries representing governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations;
6. ASSOCIATES ITSELF with the St Petersburg Ministerial Declaration on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance, as well as the Indicative List of Actions included in the Annex to the Declaration."

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Bulgaria and Romania - Rural development adaptation package - EU enlargement

The Council adopted a rural development adaptation package with a view to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. The package consists of:

- a Regulation adapting Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (9248/06). Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005² introduced general rules governing Community support for rural development policy for the period 2007 to 2013 and established priorities and measures for rural development. Those rules and measures have to be adapted to allow their implementation in Bulgaria and Romania as from the date of their accession to the EU; and
- two Decisions adapting the Act of Accession of Bulgaria and Romania as regards rural development (9605/06 and 9608/06).

¹ OJ L 347, 30.12.2005, p. 1.

² OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

INTERNAL MARKET

Motor vehicles - Type-approval system

The Council agreed on a common approach with a view to adopting a Decision on the accession of the Community to United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) Regulation 107 on uniform provisions concerning the approval of category M2 or M3 vehicles with regard to their general construction (7884/1/06). The draft Decision will be forwarded to the European Parliament for its assent.

The main purpose of the UN/ECE Regulation is to establish harmonised technical prescriptions, thereby avoiding the creation of technical barriers to trade in motor vehicles between the contracting parties, while ensuring a high level of safety and environmental protection.

The Decision will enable the Commission to vote in favour of the draft Regulation at a forthcoming meeting of the UN/ECE World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations.

TRADE POLICY

Anti-dumping - Japan - Television camera systems

The Council adopted a Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 2042/2000 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of television camera systems originating in Japan (9736/06).

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to documents

The Council adopted:

- a reply to confirmatory application No 23/c/01/06; the Swedish delegation voted against (8873/06);
- a reply to confirmatory application No 24/c/01/06 (9525/06).