



11 December 2008

Background¹
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL
Brussels, 18 and 19 December 2008

*The Council, chaired by Mr **Michel Barnier**, French Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, will meet Thursday 18 December at 14h30, in the presence of Mrs Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner responsible for agriculture and rural development, and will begin with a policy debate on the **green paper on agricultural product quality**, focusing on product standards, farming requirements and quality schemes.*

*In the afternoon, the Council will welcome Health Commissioner Mrs Androula Vassiliou and conclusions on the **safety and compliance with Community rules of animal and plant products** should be submitted to ministers' approval. The Council will subsequently be invited to define its position on a proposal for a Regulation on the **removal of surface contamination from poultry carcasses**.*

*The Council will conclude its work by seeking political agreement on **fishing opportunities for 2009** (TACs and quotas), presented by Mr **Joe Borg**, Commissioner responsible for **fisheries** and maritime affairs.*

The Presidency will hold a press conference, probably on Thursday [+/- 17.00] and at the end of the Council meeting.

*The public events may be followed by video streaming:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/videostreaming>*

¹ This note has been drawn up under the sole responsibility of the Press Service.

AGRICULTURE

Green paper on agricultural product quality

The Council will hold a policy debate on the green paper on agricultural product quality, and more particularly on product standards, farming requirements and quality schemes relating to such products ([14358/08](#)).

The Presidency's role is to contribute to the public consultation exercise under way and transmit the dossier to the Czech Presidency, which plans to organise a conference on quality policy on 12 and 13 March 2009.

Removal of surface contamination from poultry carcasses

The Council will be invited to adopt or reject, by a qualified majority, a proposal for a Decision as regards the use of antimicrobial substances to remove surface contamination from poultry carcasses ([15214/08](#)).

In the absence of a qualified majority in favour of or against the proposal, the Decision will be referred back to the Commission.

Food, feed, animal and plant imports: safety and compliance with Community rules

The Council will be asked to adopt conclusions on safety and compliance with Community rules in respect of food, feed, animal and plant imports into the Community ([10698/08](#)).

FISHERIES

Fishing opportunities for 2009

The Council should reach a political agreement on a Regulation fixing for 2009 the fishing opportunities for Community vessels, by fishing zone and by species ([15578/08](#)).

The Commission presented its proposal on 7 November 2008, based on the most recent scientific opinions on the state of the stocks submitted by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF), as well as contributions from the stakeholders consulted.

It is based on the general policy statement submitted to the Council last June ([10264/08](#)). In accordance with that Communication, for an increasing number of stocks, such as for example cod, hake, sole, plaice and nephrops, the fishing opportunities have been established on the basis of the rules laid down in the relevant multi-annual plans.

The proposal also comprises a number of related technical measures. It also allows the incorporation into the Common Fisheries Policy of measures agreed in regional fisheries organisations.

The TACs and quotas are defined each year to establish the fishing opportunities for the coming year, by species and by fishing zone (as defined by ICES). Furthermore, to authorise catches, regulations establishing the fishing opportunities are composed of measures concerning the fishing effort or other technical measures such as closures in certain zones and/or at certain times of the year.

As a result of the "front-loading" process, the TACs for the Baltic, deep-sea species and the Black Sea were the subject of political agreements at the October meeting of the Council and were adopted in November and at the beginning of December.

OTHER BUSINESS

WTO negotiations – Doha development round

Working on the basis of a presentation by the Commission, the Council will review the discussions taking place in the World Trade Organisation on the Doha Development Agenda trade negotiations.
