



Brussels, 15 January 2010

Background note¹

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL Brussels, 18 January 2010

*The Council meeting will start on Monday 18 January at 11.00 and will be chaired by Mrs **Elena Espinosa**, Minister for Agriculture of Spain.*

*In public session, the Presidency will present its **working programme** for the next six months in the fields of agriculture and fisheries.*

*In the afternoon, the Council will hold an exchange of views on key elements of the Commission communication on “A better functioning **food supply chain** in Europe”.*

A press conference will take place after the meeting (+/-16h30).

Public events can be followed via videostreaming:

<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>

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

Presidency work programme

Mrs Elena ESPINOSA will give an overview of the Spanish presidency's working programme in the field of agriculture and fisheries ([5121/1/10](#)).

This item will be taken as a public debate and can be followed on the internet by video streaming (<http://video.consilium.europa.eu/>).

The priorities of agriculture policies will include:

- the future of the common agriculture policy beyond 2013: “*Horizon 2020*”;
- the competitiveness of agriculture and the agro-food industry; and
- the role of women in rural areas.

The priorities of fisheries policies will include :

- the reform of the common fisheries policy;
- the reform of the common market organization of fishery and aquaculture products;
- the eco-label regulation for fisheries products;
- the access and fishing efforts concerning deep sea species; and
- the EU's external fisheries policy.

AGRICULTURE

Food supply chain in Europe

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the Commission communication "A better functioning food supply chain in Europe" ([15330/09](#)), on the basis of a questionnaire elaborated by the Presidency ([5214/10](#)).

The communication², which is a follow-up to the December 2008 report on food prices in Europe ([17380/08](#)), sets forth a number of policy initiatives with a view to overcoming the major challenges identified for improving the functioning of the food supply chain, in line with the roadmap set out in the food prices report.

In the second half of 2007, agricultural commodity price increases accelerated and by early 2008 reached exceptional levels. The European Council of June 2008 asked the Commission to report back on these issues by December 2008.

In response, the Commission proposed to better monitor developments in agricultural commodity and food prices, to analyse the impact of speculation on agricultural commodity prices and to investigate the functioning of the food supply chain.

During the market monitoring exercise, the Commission found out that, while on several dimensions the supply chain performs well, important challenges remain ahead with a view to its improvement.

Three cross-cutting priorities relevant to the whole chain have been identified:

- promote sustainable and market-based relationships between stakeholders in the food supply chain;
- increase transparency along the chain to encourage competition and improve its resilience to price volatility; and
- foster the integration and competitiveness of the European food supply chain across member states.

The food supply chain connects three important sectors of the European economy: agriculture, the food processing industry and the distribution sectors. Its performance has direct consequences for citizens since food represents 16% of European households' expenditures and takes on increased importance in the path towards recovery from the current economic crisis.

² The Commission communication is accompanied by six working documents:

- Analysis of price transmission along the food supply chain in the EU.
- Competition in the food supply chain.
- Outcomes of the High-Level Group on the competitiveness of the agro-food industry.
- Agricultural commodity derivative markets: the way ahead.
- Improving price transparency along the food supply chain for consumers and policy makers.
- The evolution of value-added repartition along the European food supply chain.

OTHER BUSINESS

EU live pig exports to the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union

The Council will take note of comments by the Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Polish delegations drawing attention on the situation in the pig sector following the entry into force on 1 January 2010 of the common external tariff of the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union ([5230/10](#)).

OECD meeting of ministers for agriculture

At the request of the Austrian delegation, the Council will take note of the state of preparations on the upcoming OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) meeting of ministers for agriculture that will take place in Paris on 27 and 28 February ([5343/10](#)).

Mountain agriculture

The Council will be briefed by the Austrian delegation on the outcome of the "International conference on the future of mountain areas" that took place in Alpbach, Austria, on 6 and 7 December 2009 ([5341/10](#)).

Sugar sector

The Council will take note of information to be provided by the Belgian delegation on the situation of exports in the sugar sector ([5391/10](#)).
