



Brussels, 12 May 2010

**Background note<sup>1</sup>**  
**AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL**  
**Brussels, 17 May 2010**

*The Council meeting will be exclusively dedicated to Agriculture and start on Monday 17 May at 11.00, chaired by Ms **Elena ESPINOSA**, minister for Agriculture of Spain.*

*Ministers will hold an exchange of views on **international competitiveness of the European agri-food model** and on **gender equality in rural areas**.*

*A press conference will take place after the meeting (+/-18h15).*

*Public events can be followed via videostreaming:*

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

*Video coverage of the event will be available for preview and download in broadcast quality (MPEG4) on <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>*

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<sup>1</sup> This note has been drawn up under the sole responsibility of the Press Service.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **International competitiveness of the European agri-food model**

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the competitiveness of the European agri-food model on the basis of a presidency paper ([9263/10](#)) which includes the following questionnaire:

- *Do you consider that the current European agri-food model meets the requirements and expectations of European citizens? Do you think that it is a sustainable and balanced model from the social and environmental, but also the economic point of view?*
- *Do you think that this model is sufficiently known and recognised at international level? How should we promote it and improve our negotiating position with third countries?*
- *Do you consider that the current instruments for agri-food promotion are useful, adequate and necessary in the context of the new CAP? How could we improve their efficiency?*

The presidency paper contains also a set of considerations and recommendations elaborated at a seminar on the "External competitiveness of the European agri-food model" which was organised by the Spanish Federation of Food and Drink Industries in Seville on 15 and 16 April 2010.

At the request of the Council in December 2008 ([17169/08 ADD 1](#)), Commission has initiated an internal reflection for preparing a detailed situation report on the economic impact of risks and opportunities here EU and international standards differs. This report is expected to become available by the end of 2010.

### **Gender equality in rural areas**

Ministers will also hold an exchange of views on gender equality in rural areas. This discussion will be structured by a presidency paper ([9184/10](#)), containing the following questionnaire:

- *Do you believe that an approach to gender can be incorporated in the framework of the CAP? Is this issue addressed in your country's national agriculture and rural development policy? If so, how?*
- *How could this be implemented under Pillar 1 of the CAP? What specific measures would you suggest (e.g. voluntary selection criteria giving priority to women in the national reserve, etc.)?*

- *How could this be implemented under Pillar 2 of the CAP? What specific measures would you suggest (e.g. increasing the intensity of various aid schemes, such as the setting up of young farmers if they are women)?*
- *Regardless of the particular situation of your country, do you consider it necessary that the issue of gender be addressed in the next reform of the CAP?*

The presidency contribution reflects the conclusions reached at a seminar on "Women in the Sustainable Development of the Rural World" held by the Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs in Cáceres (Spain) on 27-29 April 2010. One of the most important outcomes of this seminar was the recognition that gender equality is essential to keep the rural environment alive.

The presidency considers gender equality as one of the fundamental principles of the EU law and one of the Union's priority policies. It's intention is to highlight the role women play in rural areas as backbones of the social fabric, diversifying rural economy and preserving the environment, while recognising that their current situation is sometimes particularly precarious. The discussion is also an opportunity to consider how to integrate positive discrimination in the next rural development programming period 2014 to 2020.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### ***Preparing forests for climate change***

The presidency will inform the Council on the follow-up to the conference which took place on 6-7 April 2010 in Valsain (Spain) and on draft Council conclusions (8539/1/10).

### ***Paying agencies***

The Council will be briefed on the general conclusions drawn after the 27th conference of EU Paying Agencies held in Oviedo on 28-30 April 2010 ([9185/10](#)).

### ***Trade negotiations with Mercosur***

At the initiative of the French delegation, the Council will be briefed by the Commission on the state of play of the trade negotiations with Mercosur ([9686/10](#)).