



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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3108th Council meeting

Agriculture and Fisheries

Brussels, 19 July 2011

President

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Main results of the Council

*The Presidency presented its **agriculture and fisheries work programme** for the next six months in public session.*

*Concerning fisheries, the Council held a public debate, on Commission proposals for the **reform of the Common fisheries policy (CFP)**.*

*During lunch, ministers had a discussion on **the energy use of biomass from agriculture as an important element of the CAP**.*

*As regards agriculture, ministers were briefed in a public debate on the **Green paper on promotion measures for agricultural products** and held an exchange of views on this item.*

*Finally, the Council was briefed on the **revision of the cod TAC in the Celtic Sea for 2011**, the conclusions of the **Beef reflection group**, the **reduction of regulatory burdens on farm businesses**, the **follow-up to the E. coli outbreak**, and the **food crisis in the Horn of Africa**.*

CONTENTS¹

PARTICIPANTS	6
---------------------------	----------

ITEMS DEBATED

Presidency work programme	8
---------------------------------	---

FISHERIES	9
------------------------	----------

Common fisheries policy reform	9
--------------------------------------	---

AGRICULTURE	11
--------------------------	-----------

Green paper on promotion measures for agricultural products	11
-------------------------------------------------------------------	----

ANY OTHER BUSINESS	13
---------------------------------	-----------

Cod TAC in the Celtic Sea for 2011	13
------------------------------------------	----

Beef reflection group	13
-----------------------------	----

Reducing regulatory burdens on farm businesses	14
------------------------------------------------------	----

Follow-up to the <i>E. coli</i> outbreak	15
------------------------------------------------	----

Food crisis in the of the Horn of Africa	16
------------------------------------------------	----

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED*FISHERIES*

– Fishing opportunities 2011/2012 - Anchovy in the Bay of Biscay	17
------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

– Partnership agreement with Denmark and Greenland - Opening of negotiations	17
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

FOOD

– Contaminants in foodstuffs: maximum levels and official controls	18
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

¹ 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.

ENVIRONMENT

- Waste electronic and electrical equipment..... 18
- Biocidal products 19
- Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances..... 19

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

- EU/Switzerland agreement - Mutual recognition of professional qualifications 19

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

- Dactyloscopic data exchange - Czech Republic 20
- Automated exchange of DNA data - Portugal 20

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

- Cooperation in fields outside the four freedoms 20
- Audiovisual cooperation programme (Media Mundus programme)..... 21
- Amendment to Annex XIII (transport) 21

INTERNAL MARKET

- Tractors - Emission limits..... 21
- Labelling of textile products 22

TRADE POLICY

- Trade facilities for the outermost regions 22

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

- External financial instruments 23

EURATOM

- Radioactive waste management* 24

CULTURE

- European Heritage Label 24

SOCIAL POLICY

- 2012: Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations..... 25

TRANSPORT

- Aviation safety agreement with Canada* 25

APPOINTMENTS

– Committee of the Regions25

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Mr Andy LEBRECHT

Deputy Permanent Representative

Commission:Mr Dacian CIOLOȘ
Ms Maria DAMANAKI

Member

Member

ITEMS DEBATED

Presidency work programme

The Presidency gave a public presentation on its work programme in the agriculture and fisheries sectors ([12585/11](#)).

The agricultural policy priorities will include:

- the debate on the Commission proposals for the **common agricultural policy (CAP) after 2013** which will be presented in October 2011. In the context of this debate special attention will be paid to support for investments in the **development of renewable energy in rural areas**;
- the **streamlining of the CAP**;
- the discussions on the **agricultural product-quality package** and on the **milk package**;
- the **alignment of the CAP** on the Lisbon Treaty; and
- the **promotion of agricultural products**, discussed already in this meeting (see below), which will also be the main subject of the informal meeting of the agriculture ministers in Wroclaw (11-13 September 2011).

The priorities for fisheries policy will focus on:

- the Commission proposals for the reform of the **common fisheries policy** presented later during the meeting (see below);
- **the setting of 2012 fishing quotas and TACs** in line with the principle of sustainable fisheries on the basis of proposals presented by the Commission.

As regards veterinary and phytosanitary issues the Presidency intends to work on:

- the proposal to introduce electronic identification for bovine animals;
- the new EU Plant Health Strategy.

Finally, for forestry, the Presidency will devote special attention to a possible **legally binding agreement on forests** in Europe in the framework of the FOREST EUROPE process.

FISHERIES

Common fisheries policy reform

The Council held a public exchange of views on Commission proposals for the reform of the common fisheries policy (CFP).

The member states welcomed the general approach proposed by the Commission in the "package" for the reform of the CFP. However, while praising the proposed objective of maximum sustainable yield (MSY), several member states stressed the difficulty of reaching the objective by 2015 and would prefer a more gradual approach. While the proposal to introduce a system of transferable fishing concessions was generally considered a good basis for further discussion, many member states insisted that this system should be managed at national level, with sufficient safeguards and flexibility. As regards the ban on discards, most member states agreed with the objective of promoting sustainable fishing, but some noted that the deadline proposed in the package could be too tight to implement efficient measures. The concept of regionalisation was positively received in general, although its details will have to be analysed further.

The vast majority of delegations acknowledged the importance given to aquaculture in this "package" in line with the declaration on the future role of freshwater aquaculture and inland fisheries within the CFP reform presented during the agriculture Council in April 2011 ([8081/11](#)). Several member states noted also that EU's external fishery policy had been given a specific place in the proposals. Many delegations felt it necessary to provide for special treatment for small scale coastal fleet segments.

Many delegations regretted that the financial framework for the future CFP had not been presented with the package. This framework will be presented later by the Commission.

This exchange of views launched the CFP reform process.

The Commission presented the "package" consisting of the following proposals and communications:

- Proposal for a regulation on the CFP ([12514/11](#)) replacing the basic provisions of the CFP;
- Proposal for a regulation on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products ([12516/11](#)), focussing on market policy issues;

- Communication from the Commission on the external dimension of the CFP ([12517/11](#));
- Report from the Commission on reporting obligations under regulation 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the CFP ([12518/11](#));
- Communication from the Commission on the reform of the CFP, explaining the organisation of the "package" ([12519/11](#)).

There are three main strands to the Commission proposals for the reform of the CFP: sustainability, efficiency and consistency. Fishing sustainability would be based on reaching the MSY level for fish stocks in 2015 and the implementation of measures banning discards. Regionalisation and the priority given to the long-term management of stocks would ensure the efficiency of this policy as would the reinforcement of producer organisations and the implementation of a transferable fishing concession system. The consistency of the new policy that is proposed would mean that all elements of the new CFP would contribute to its sustainability and efficiency.

In April 2009 the Commission presented a green paper that analysed the consequences of the last CFP reform in 2002 and the current situation of European fisheries. Until the end of 2009 a broad public consultation process was conducted on the basis of the green paper. The Commission summarised the contributions in April 2010.

Since then, further consultations on the main reform ideas have been held through thematic seminars organised by the Spanish and the Belgian presidencies under their own initiative or in conjunction with the Commission.

On 1 March 2011 a high-level meeting with ministers on discards was organised by commissioner Damanaki. She explained the Commission's intention to introduce a mandatory discard ban as part of the CFP reform. On 3 May stakeholders' views on this issue were set out at a hearing organised to this effect.

The Netherlands and the Commission organised a high-level conference on the reform in Noordwijk from 9 to 11 March 2011 where the market aspects of the reform, the financial instruments and the issue of decentralisation were discussed. The outcome of the conference was presented to the ministers at the last agriculture and fisheries Council on 28 June 2011 ([11866/11](#); [11835/11](#)).

Finally, on 13 May 2011 the Commission held a ministerial meeting on the future of fisheries partnership agreements which was meant to provide further input for the debate on reforming the external aspects of the CFP.

AGRICULTURE

Green paper on promotion measures for agricultural products

The ministers were briefed by the Commission and held a public exchange of views concerning the "Green paper on promotion measures and information provisions for agricultural products: a reinforced value-added European strategy for promoting the tastes of Europe" ([12817/11](#)).

The launch of a broad consultation on the promotion of agricultural products was welcomed by member states as a necessary measure to inform EU citizens and foreign countries about the high standards and quality of EU products. However, several delegations stressed the need for a simpler and quicker procedure to activate the system. Some member states mentioned also a specific flexible procedure to respond to a crisis such as the *E. coli* outbreak. Several possibilities mentioned in the green paper, such as the possibility of promotion at local and regional level, were favourably received by many delegations, as was the possibility of promotion campaigns involving several member states and several products.

The Presidency took note of the remarks made by delegations and recalled that this subject was one of its priorities (see above). This issue will constitute the main subject of the informal meeting of the agriculture ministers in Wroclaw (11-13 September 2011). Ministers will then have the opportunity to debate this question further.

The green paper explains that the quality of Europe's agricultural and agri-food products is widely acknowledged and that their promotion in the EU member states and in third countries has become essential. Moreover, this promotion should now reflect the new challenges agriculture is facing: the investment of EU producers in food safety, environment and animal welfare, the emergence of new competitors both in the EU market and in emerging markets and also the great diversity of the EU's culinary heritage.

A reform of the CAP post 2013 is currently under way and legislative proposals for this reform will be presented in October this year. At the same time, this calls for a fundamental review of the policy for information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products in order to take into account the new challenges of the future CAP.

With this consultation, the Commission is opening a debate in order to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders (consumers, producers, distributors and authorities) to give their views on what they expect from the EU promotion policy for agricultural products in the future. The Commission would like the stakeholders targeted by this consultation to reply to a series of questions resulting from the detailed analysis of the current promotion regime initiated at the beginning of the eighties and extended in scope in 2000.

The consultation is open until 30 September 2011. Following this consultation, concrete options will be presented by mid 2012, followed by legislative proposals by the end of 2012.

This year only, 26 programmes in 13 member states have been approved to provide information on and to promote agricultural products in the EU. The total budget for the programmes, which will run for between one and three years, is €75.1 million, of which the EU will contribute €37.6 million (these programmes are 50% co financed by the EU). The selected programmes cover wine, protected geographical indications, organic food and farming, fruit and vegetables, horticulture, milk and milk products, olive oil and table olives, eggs, seed oil and meat. Furthermore, in the light of the *E. coli* outbreak which hit the fruit and vegetables sector in the spring (see below), member states will soon have the opportunity to submit additional promotional programmes for these products. An additional budget of €15 million has been scheduled for these specific promotion campaigns, which could be launched by the autumn.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cod TAC in the Celtic Sea for 2011

The Council was briefed by the French and Irish delegations on the revision of the cod TAC in the Celtic Sea for 2011.

France and Ireland noted that the most recent scientific advice from ICES (International Council for Exploration of the Seas) states that the amount of cod in the Celtic Sea (ICES Area VIIb, VIIc, VIIe-k) has increased as a consequence of an exceptionally strong 2009 year class.

However, this exceptional situation was not taken into account in the existing TAC for 2011 established last year and adopted at the fisheries Council of December 2010. This TAC is set at around half the level advised by ICES in its current forecast for June 2011. Considering the difficulties which fishermen have in managing this TAC in mixed fisheries where cod is caught together with other fish, France and Ireland would like to have an in-year revision of the 2011 TAC: an increase in the level of this TAC would mean fewer cod discards in the Celtic Sea.

Some member states supported this request. The Commission will assess the data provided by France and Ireland but insisted that any increase in a TAC would have to come with safeguard clauses ensuring that there were no negative effects on the other fish caught in the same area.

Beef reflection group

Ministers were briefed by the Commission on the conclusions of the Beef reflection group ([12631/11](#)).

Considering the current difficult situation in the beef sector, the Commission launched a reflection process involving member states and stakeholders in the margin of the informal agriculture meeting of 29-31 May 2011 in Debrecen. In addition, during the extraordinary agriculture Council on 7 June 2011, ministers were informed by France supported by Belgium of the impact of the drought situation in certain European countries, in particular on the bovine sector ([11006/11](#)), reinforcing interest in the creation of a reflection group. An expert group was held on 15 June and an advisory committee the day after. A joint discussion meeting with members from both groups was held on 29 June 2011.

The Commission reported on the main issues debated in this group:

- the current and possible future market measures which should operate as a safety net whilst market orientation is maintained;
- the importance of direct payment schemes which constitute an essential support in this sector;
- the impact of rural development legislation which could provide several specific instruments;

Measures to ensure a better functioning of the food chain were also mentioned by several members of the Beef reflection group.

The Commission highlighted that the beef sector was in a paradoxical situation where market prices were still high but producers' revenue was being reduced by the price of feed and other inputs.

The Commission indicated the services would be considering the suggestions made with the view to reflecting many of them in the future proposals for the reform of the CAP. The Presidency concluded indicating that the Council had taken note of the information provided by the Commission.

Reducing regulatory burdens on farm businesses

The United Kingdom briefed the ministers about an independent report on how to reduce regulatory burdens on farmers without reducing standards, with the aim of increasing farming and food industry competitiveness ([12850/11](#)).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) invited a specific farming regulation task force, led and guided by industry, to review all national and EU regulations that affect the farming and food industries and to advise on how best to achieve a risk-based system of regulation, whilst maintaining high environmental, welfare and safety standards. The report of the task force was published in May 2011

The report recommends a new approach to regulation, based on trust, responsibility and partnership between government and industry. Furthermore several recommendations are made about how individual regulations and processes could be improved without reducing standards – from environmental and animal health legislation to paperwork and inspections.

Some proposals would require changes to the UK's domestic regulations – but others would need amendments to EU legislation which could be discussed with the other member states in the light of the forthcoming reform of the CAP. Some member states supported the conclusions of the report and noted that it was in line with a note on the simplification of the CAP beyond 2013 supported by 26 member states. This note was presented in the agriculture Council in March 2011 ([7206/11](#)).

Copies of the report were distributed at Council. The report is also available to download at: www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/farm-manage/farm-regulation/.

Follow-up to the *E. coli* outbreak

At the request of the Belgian, Spanish and Dutch delegations, ministers followed-up on the extraordinary Council of 7 June 2011 on the EU food safety and market implications of the recent *Escherichia coli* (*E.coli*) outbreak in northern Germany ([11006/11](#)) and the item on the same subject on the agenda for the last agriculture Council of 28 June 2011 ([11835/11](#)).

Several member states expressed satisfaction at the Commission's speedy reaction to the crisis and underlined that the priority was now to restore consumer confidence. However, they regretted that the rapid intervention to compensate the vegetable producers affected by the outbreak did not take into account specific situations, such as where producers had had to sell their produce at very low prices. Other delegations stressed that lessons should be drawn from the current crisis and that the future proposals on the reform of the CAP should take this into account. Some member states would like an assessment of the way the rapid alert system managed the crisis.

The source of the *E. coli* outbreak was identified by the German authorities as bean sprouts originating from a farm in the north of the country. In addition, the German outbreak has been linked to another *E. coli* outbreak which occurred in France some days after. It seems that in both cases, the origin of the contamination of the seeds was traced back to Egypt. The Commission would send an inspection team to the country.

As regards the impact of the outbreak on the market, the Commission allocated an emergency overall budget envelope of € 210 million to partially compensate producers of cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, courgettes and sweet peppers in the EU¹.

¹ [Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No. 585/2011 OJEU L160, 18.6.2011, p.71](#)

The Commission insisted that member states should have the necessary controls in place to cover the demands for compensations, in order to guarantee the proper use of the financial resources. National requests for compensation from the members states were currently being assessed. A first overview of the complete situation was expected in the days to come.

The Commission noted also that in many cases, vegetable prices had recovered and were now at the same level they were in the same period the previous year.

As regards the implications of the crisis for international trade, Russia's ban on EU exports of vegetables and fruit has caused major economic losses to farmers and traders. The Commission informed the Council that it had come to an agreement with the Russian authorities, which would accept certification of the food safety of the products. The Russian ban has now been lifted for the member states who so requested. This certification is a temporary measure.

Finally, the Commission has raised the budget for the promotion of these products and announced its intention to initiate a large-scale promotion campaign in the autumn. In the meanwhile, a publicity and communication campaign would start soon in the media.

Food crisis in the Horn of Africa

The Council was briefed by the French delegation on the current food and nutrition crisis in the countries of the Horn of Africa ([13007/11](#)).

Following up on the adoption of the Action plan on the volatility of food prices and agriculture by agriculture ministers at the G20 meeting in Paris on 22 and 23 June 2011, presented during the Council on 28 June 2011 ([11835/11](#), [12315/11](#)), France as Presidency of the G20, drew the attention of ministers to the food and nutrition crisis in the countries of the Horn of Africa and to the need for international coordination of the short and medium-term response to this crisis.

France further informed delegations of its letter sent by the French presidency of the G20 to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), requesting the organization of an emergency FAO meeting on this subject, with the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The FAO announced the organisation of this emergency meeting on 25 July 2011.

The Commission confirmed its intention to participate in this meeting.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

FISHERIES

Fishing opportunities 2011/2012 - Anchovy in the Bay of Biscay

The Council adopted a regulation establishing the fishing opportunities for anchovy in the Bay of Biscay for the 2011 / 2012 fishing season ([12598/11](#)).

The Council establishes the total allowable catches (TACs) by fishery or group of fisheries. Fishing opportunities should be distributed among member states in such a way as to ensure the relative stability of each member state's fishing activities for all stocks or groups of stocks, with due regard for the objectives of the CFP.

In the particular case of anchovy, TACs and member state quotas for this stock in the Bay of Biscay (ICES subarea VIII) are established for an annual management season running from 1 July to 30 June of the following year, rather than a calendar year management period.

The Bay of Biscay anchovy TAC for the 2011/2012 fishing season is established on the basis of the scientific advice available, taking into account biological and socioeconomic aspects and ensuring fair treatment between fishing sectors. In addition the proposal takes into account data provided for in the 2009 proposal establishing a long-term plan for the anchovy stock in the Bay of Biscay.

The TAC applies from 1 July 2011.

Partnership agreement with Denmark and Greenland - Opening of negotiations

The Council decided to authorise the Commission to open negotiations on behalf of the EU for the renewal of the protocol to the fisheries partnership agreement with Denmark and Greenland.

The EU, on one hand, and Denmark and Greenland, on the other, initialled a fisheries partnership agreement in 2006. The objective of the negotiations is the renewal of the protocol to this agreement which entered in force on 1 January 2007 and will expire on 31 December 2012.

FOOD

Contaminants in foodstuffs: maximum levels and official controls

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of the following two Commission regulations:

- regulation amending regulation 1881/2006 as regards maximum levels for polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in foodstuffs ([10014/11](#));
- regulation amending regulation 333/2007 laying down the methods of sampling and analysis for the official control of the levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, inorganic tin, 3-MCPD and benzo(a)pyrene in foodstuffs ([10029/11](#)).

The Commission regulations are subject to the so called 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.

ENVIRONMENT

Waste electronic and electrical equipment

The Council adopted its position at first reading concerning revised EU rules on waste electric and electronic equipment such as mobile phones and household appliances ([7906/11](#) + [COR2](#), [7906/11](#) [ADD1](#) + [COR1](#))

For more information, see press release [7632/11](#).

Biocidal products

The Council did not oppose the proposed authorisation of *Bacillus thuringiensis subsp. israelensis* Serotype H14, Strain AM65-52, deltamethrin and lambda-cyhalothrin as active substances in insecticides, acaricides and products to control other arthropods. The decision is to take effect as of 1 October 2013 ([11998/11](#), [11974/11](#), [11961/11](#)).

The three draft Commission directives are subject to the so-called 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.

Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances

The Council authorised the Commission to negotiate on behalf of the EU at the twenty-third and twenty-fourth meetings of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on ozone-depleting substances. At the same time, it adopted negotiating directives for the Commission.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

EU/Switzerland agreement - Mutual recognition of professional qualifications

The Council adopted a position to be taken at the EU-Switzerland joint committee established by the EU/Switzerland agreement on free movement of persons, aimed at updating the provisions of the agreement on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications ([11448/11](#) + [11449/11](#)).

The draft decision of the EU-Switzerland joint committee seeks to replace annex III (on mutual recognition of professional qualifications) to the agreement to take into account the new legal acts adopted by the EU since 2004.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

Dactyloscopic data exchange - Czech Republic

The Council adopted a decision on the launch of automated data exchange concerning dactyloscopic data in the Czech Republic ([12263/11](#)). The evaluation procedure required by Council Decision 2008/616/JHA ([OJL 210, 6.8.2008](#)) concluded that the general provisions on data protection were fully implemented by the Czech Republic and that this country is therefore entitled to start receiving and supplying fingerprint data for the purpose of prevention and investigation of criminal offences.

Automated exchange of DNA data - Portugal

The Council adopted a decision on the launch of automated data exchange concerning DNA data in Portugal ([12155/11](#)). The evaluation procedure required by Council Decision 2008/616/JHA ([OJL 210, 6.8.2008](#)) concluded that the general provisions on data protection are fully implemented by Portugal and that this country is therefore entitled to start receiving and supplying personal data for the purpose of prevention and investigation of criminal offences.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA

Cooperation in fields outside the four freedoms

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the European Union at the European Economic Area (EEA) joint committee concerning an amendment to Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement, so that cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms can be continued beyond 31 December 2010 ([12093/11](#)).

The amendment will allow for the EEA EFTA¹ States' continued participation in EU actions funded from the general budget of the Union regarding the implementation, operation and development of the internal market.

¹ EFTA: European Free Trade Association

Audiovisual cooperation programme (Media Mundus programme)

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the European Union at the European Economic Area (EEA) joint committee concerning an amendment to Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement, in order to include decision 1041/2009/EC establishing an audiovisual cooperation programme with professionals from third countries (MEDIA Mundus programme) ([12096/11](#)).

Amendment to Annex XIII (transport)

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken by the European Union at the European Economic Area (EEA) joint committee concerning an amendment to Annex XIII (transport) to the EEA agreement.

The amendment is needed in order to incorporate regulation (EC) No 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services into the EEA agreement ([12118/11](#)).

INTERNAL MARKET**Tractors - Emission limits**

The Council adopted a directive aimed at enabling tractor manufacturers to adapt to new technological requirements for engines in order to comply with pollutant emissions limits, by increasing the flexibility scheme provided for in directive 2000/25/CE ([19/11](#)).

Adoption of the new directive, which amends directive 2000/25/EC on actions against the emission of pollutants by engines for agricultural and forestry tractors, follows an agreement at first reading with the European Parliament.

Directive 2000/25/EC provides that the emission limits applicable for the type approval of the majority of compression ignition engines are gradually to be replaced by more stringent limits. It also provides for a flexibility scheme to allow tractor manufacturers to purchase, during a given stage, a limited number of engines that do not comply with the emission limits applicable during that stage.

Labelling of textile products

The Council adopted a regulation for reviewing the EU system for the standard description of fibres and the labelling of textile products ([21/11](#) and [12419/11 ADD 1](#)).

The regulation will revise current rules on the use of textile fibre names, labelling, marking and determination of the fibre composition of textile products, with a view to improving the functioning of the internal market and to providing accurate information to consumers.

For more details see press release [13055/11](#).

TRADE POLICY

Trade facilities for the outermost regions

The Council adopted a decision amending decision 2004/162/EC as regards the products that may benefit from exemption from or a reduction in dock dues in the French overseas departments (DOMs) ([12158/11](#)).

Certain products which are not produced locally any more and to which the French authorities no longer apply differentiated taxation have been removed from the list of products eligible for tax exemptions or tax reductions. This also concerns locally manufactured products which are as competitive as those coming from outside the DOMs. For products for which the tax differential actually applied is significantly below the maximum authorised, the maximum differential allowed has been reduced. With respect to French Guiana, new products have been added to the list of products eligible for tax exemptions or tax reductions, and the differential authorised has been increased for certain products.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

External financial instruments

The Council did not approve the of the European Parliament's second-reading amendments to the following four proposals:

- Proposal for a Council regulation amending regulation (EC) no 1934/2006 establishing a financing instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries and territories ([12495/11](#));
- Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation ([12496/11](#));
- Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending regulation (EC) No 1889/2006 on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide ([12497/11](#));
- Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation ([12498/11](#)).

They concern the review of three financial instruments for EU external action as well as the creation of a EUR 190m programme to help banana-producing ACP countries adjust to trade liberalisation on the banana market. In accordance with Article 294(8)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, a conciliation committee will be convened so as to permit representatives of the Council and the European Parliament to discuss the four draft acts.

EURATOM

Radioactive waste management*

The Council adopted a directive establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste ([12142/11](#) + [12248/11](#)) resulting from civilian activities. The aim of this directive is to ensure a high level of safety in these procedures in order to protect workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation and to avoid imposing undue burdens on future generations.

The directive will enter into force on the 20th day following its publication in the Official Journal. Member states will have two years to transpose its provisions into national law.

For further details see also: Press release ([12318/11](#))

CULTURE

European Heritage Label

The Council adopted its first-reading position on a decision establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label ([10303/11](#)), which is granted to sites with a strong symbolic - not only aesthetic - value in terms of European history and heritage (such as monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes and objects).

This action is aimed at promoting the democratic values and human rights that underpin European integration and at strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to Europe, especially among young people. The European Heritage Label is also meant to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of regions, in particular through cultural tourism.

See also press release ([10294/11](#))

SOCIAL POLICY

2012: Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations

The Council adopted a decision designating 2012 as the European Year for active ageing and solidarity between generations ([12420/11](#)+ [ADD 1](#)).

The promotion of active ageing involves creating better opportunities and working conditions to enable women and men who are in their late 50s and above to play their part in the labour market, combating social exclusion by fostering active participation in society, and encouraging healthy ageing.

TRANSPORT

Aviation safety agreement with Canada*

The Council authorised the conclusion of an agreement between the EU and Canada on civil aviation safety, following the consent given by the European Parliament ([12705/11](#); text of the agreement in Official Journal [L 153](#) of 17 June 2009, p. 11-28).

The agreement, signed in 2009, provides for the mutual recognition of certification findings and approvals in the areas of airworthiness of civil aeronautical products, services and manufacturing and maintenance organisations. It aims to promote cooperation and increase efficiency in matters relating to civil aviation safety, so as to enhance safety and environmental quality and facilitate the exchange of civil aeronautical products.

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council appointed Mr Charalambos PITTAS (Cyprus) ([12547/11](#)) and Mr Milan FTÁČNIK and Mr Richard RAŠI (Slovakia) ([12531/11](#)) as members of the Committee of the Regions for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 25 January 2015.