



AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL

Brussels, 6 March 2017

The Council meeting will take place on Monday 6 March 2017 in Brussels at 10.00, and will address both fisheries and agricultural matters. It will be chaired by Mr **Roderick Galdes**, Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights.

The Council will start by discussing fisheries items. The Commission will first present its proposal establishing a **multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea**, and then brief ministers about the "**Our Oceans 2017**" conference.

The Council will then be informed by Commissioner Andriukaitis about the setting up of the **Animal welfare platform**, after which Croatia will inform ministers on the latest developments in the **lumpy skin disease** situation.

After that, Commissioner Jourova will join the Council for the information point on **dual quality of foodstuffs**.

After lunch, the Council will move to SCA items, with a debate on the future of the **Common Agricultural Policy**.

Under any other business, ministers will also be informed of the outcome of the **G20 agriculture ministers' conference** that took place in Berlin, and the outcome of the **forum on the EU rice-sector** held in Milan. The Council will then be briefed on the **EU solidarity corps, voluntary coupled support**, the difficult market situation on the **Polish fruit sector**, as well as about the better functioning of the **food supply chain**.

A press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (at around 18. 05) with Commissioner Hogan.

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

FISHERIES

Multi-annual plan for small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea

The Commission will present its proposal establishing a multi-annual plan for small pelagic stocks in the Adriatic Sea ([6575/17](#) + [ADD 1](#)) and the Council will have the opportunity to have a first exchange of views on it.

The objective of the proposal is to introduce for the first time a comprehensive and effective management framework to address the problem of overexploitation of stocks such as sardines and anchovies, as well as mackerel and horse mackerel (by-catches). The plan will apply to all EU fishing vessels, whether or not they fish in the Adriatic Sea, and include target fishing mortalities expressed in ranges for each of the stocks, where available. Target fishing mortalities will then be the basis for setting annual catch limits. Furthermore, the multiannual plan will incorporate safeguard measures to give a framework to restore stocks when they fall below safe biological limits.

The multiannual plan should also facilitate the introduction of the landing obligation and the effective use of regional cooperation in adopting provisions for specific conservation measures.

Small pelagic species (which swim near the surface) represent a high economic income for the fisheries sector in the Adriatic. The most valuable and sought-after small pelagic species in the Adriatic Sea are anchovy and sardine, with anchovy being the more valuable of the two species. The vast majority are caught by Italy and Croatia, in the northern part of the Adriatic. Other member states involved in the fishery but having only a small fraction of catches are Slovenia, Albania and Montenegro.

Currently, small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea are governed by several legal frameworks, at national, EU and international level.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Our Oceans 2017 conference, Malta, 5–6 October 2017

The Commission will inform the Council about the fourth international Our Ocean conference that will be hosted by the EU in Malta on 5 and 6 October 2017.

The conference is a global, high-level, invitation-only event that will gather new, concrete and measurable commitments by both the public and the private sector and track progress on the delivery of commitments made at previous Our Ocean Conferences.

The fourth Our Ocean Conference will focus on four themes: marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate-related impacts on the ocean. The blue economy and maritime security will be integrated into those themes. Special emphasis will be placed on geographic areas of particular importance for the EU, such as the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean.

AGRICULTURE

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2020

Following the launch of the public consultation on 'Modernising and simplifying the CAP' by the Commission, and building on a number of recent debates on the same matter, ministers will be invited to share their ideas on the future of the CAP, by suggesting concrete policy options. The discussion will be based on an orientation paper prepared by the presidency ([6766/17](#)).

In particular ministers will be invited to answer the following questions:

- in your view, what would be most effective way to address the CAP priorities?
- without prejudice to the overall financing of the CAP, do you think that a rebalancing exercise should take place between the first and the second pillar of the CAP in order to deliver on these priorities?

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Animal welfare platform

The Commission will inform the Council on the latest developments in the setting up of the EU Platform on animal welfare ([6634/17](#)).

The platform will bring together relevant stakeholders and public entities in order to promote Union standards on animal welfare, encourage dialogue between them as well as share best practices, scientific knowledge and policy developments in this field. On 30 January 2017 the Commission launched a call for applications to select the platform's 40 members. The first meeting of the platform will be held during the Maltese presidency on 6 June in Brussels and the second is foreseen for November 2017.

Lumpy skin disease

The Croatian delegation will inform ministers of the current concerns linked to the preventive measures taken in the Republic of Croatia to face the outbreaks of lumpy skin disease in the neighbouring countries ([6797/17](#)).

Croatia will also take the opportunity to ask the Commission to consider compensation for the costs and losses incurred, and to consider amending decision 2016/2008 for the year 2018 and include an 'exit' strategy for the movement of vaccinated cattle within the EU when vaccination will not be performed anymore.

Dual quality of foodstuffs

On the initiative of the Hungarian and Slovak delegations ministers will be informed of the issue of different quality of foodstuffs with the same name and labelling, sold in different EU countries often from the same producer ([6716/17](#)). In particular, Hungary and Slovakia will share the results of a series of tests carried out on cases of dual quality of foodstuffs and ask the Commission to consider appropriate action including legislation at EU level.

Better functioning of the food supply chain

The Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Slovak and Slovenian delegations will present their non paper on 'Better functioning of the Food Supply Chain: addressing unfair trade practices (UTPs) and improving the position of farmers' ([6808/17](#)). The document aims to contribute to the establishment of an EU legislative framework to regulate UTPs and to define additional tools needed for strengthening the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

G20 agriculture ministers' conference, Berlin, 22 January 2017

The German delegation will report on the outcome of the meeting of the G20 agriculture ministers, which took place in Berlin in January and focused on the following three issues: water, antibiotics and digitisation ([6385/17](#)). On the occasion of that meeting, ministers adopted a declaration and action plan both entitled: "Towards food and water security: Fostering sustainability, advancing innovation".

EU solidarity corps

The Commission will inform the Council about the European solidarity corps and the opportunities for volunteer work available, in particular, under the Common Agricultural Policy, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and LIFE, the EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU ([6854/17](#)).

The European Solidarity Corps were launched on 7 December 2016, and are an initiative allowing young people to participate in a wide range of activities to show their solidarity in practice through either volunteering or employment, traineeship or apprenticeship while helping to tackle challenges across Europe.

Fields of intervention include activities of general interest such as education, health, integration of migrants and refugees, provision of food, environmental protection or prevention of natural disasters, agricultural and rural areas related activities.

Market difficulties in the Polish fruit sector

The Polish delegation will express its concerns about the market situation in the fruit sector, affected by the continuation of the ban introduced by the Russian Federation on the import of certain agricultural products originating in the European Union ([6790/17](#)).

In order to address the difficulties currently faced by local farmers, Poland will also request to amend Commission delegated regulation 2016/921 as regards the quantity of apples and pears allocated to Poland.

Voluntary coupled support

The Bulgarian, Croatian, Cyprus, Czech, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Latvian, Polish, Romanian and Slovenian delegations will present their note concerning the implementation of voluntary coupled support ([6861/17](#)). They will take the opportunity to express their concerns about the Commission scrutiny of national decisions and its impact on the effective implementation of voluntary coupled support measures, and will ask for a more flexibility.

Forum on the EU rice sector, Milan, 20 February 2017

The Italian delegation will brief ministers on the outcome of the first forum on the EU rice sector, which took place in Milan on 20 February 2017 ([6867/17](#)), and gathered more than 50 participants representing the main rice-producing countries, as well as European sectorial organisations such as COPA, the Union of Rice Farmers and the Federation of European Rice Millers.
