



Council of the European Union

PRESS
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BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 9 June 2015

AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council

16 June 2015 in Luxembourg

The Council meeting will address agricultural and fisheries matters and will start at 9.30 on Tuesday 16 June 2015. It will be chaired by Mr Jānis Dūklavs, Latvia's Minister for Agriculture.

*On agriculture, ministers will try to reach agreement on a general approach on a proposal for a regulation regarding **organic farming**.*

*As regards fisheries issues, ministers will be briefed and will hold an exchange of views on a Commission communication concerning a consultation on **fishing opportunities for 2016**.*

*Finally, the Council will be briefed on **animal health**, on the **indication of the country of origin for certain food products**, on **rural development** and **fisheries operation programme**, on the **Visegrad group** and on **plant health**.*

A press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 18.30).

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Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>

Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery: www.eucouncil.tv

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

AGRICULTURE

Organic farming - General approach

The Council will try reach agreement on a general approach on a proposal for a regulation on organic farming ([8576/15](#)).

The proposal is aimed at revising the existing legislation on organic production and labelling of organic products so as to remove obstacles to the development of organic production in the EU, guarantee fair competition for farmers and operators and improve consumer confidence in organic products.

A general approach is a political agreement on the position of the Council on a proposal for a regulation. The agreement sought on organic production and labelling of organic products will make it possible to launch negotiations between the Parliament and the Council with a view to reaching a political agreement between the EU institutions. In the Parliament, the vote on the report presented by the rapporteur is expected to take place in mid-July or mid-September 2015 in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

In May, the debate in relation to a general approach on this issue showed that significant progress has been made on a number of articles. However, some member states requested more time to reflect further on some sensitive issues such as controls and the presence of non-authorised products or substances in organic products.

FISHERIES

Fishing opportunities for 2016

The Council will be briefed and will hold an exchange of views on a Commission communication concerning a consultation on fishing opportunities for 2016 ([9341/15](#)).

The communication sets out the general approach to be taken by the Commission in formulating its proposals for fishing opportunities for 2016. The document outlines the state of the stocks, gives a limited overview of the economic performance of the EU fleet, and stresses the commitment to long-term management plans and to management in accordance with scientific advice.

The fishing opportunities for 2016 will be fixed under the objectives of the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), in particular the objective of bringing the impact of fishing fleets on the stocks (fishing mortality) in the shortest feasible time frame to the levels required to allow stocks to rebuild to biomass levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield (MSY). This will help to ensure the achievement of good environmental status in European seas by 2020 and reduce the impact of fishing on the marine ecosystem. The Commission will base its proposals for fishing opportunities on the available biological advice . Where no such advice is available, the Commission will apply the precautionary approach in line with the CFP objectives.

In addition, 2016 is the year in which the landing obligation for demersal fisheries in the North Sea and in the Atlantic European Union (EU) waters comes into force, which means that a significant part of the EU fleet in the North East Atlantic will be under an obligation to bring and retain on board, and to land all catches. Fishing opportunities for stocks falling under the landing obligation are to be fixed taking into account catches rather than landings, based on biological advice and in the understanding that this should not jeopardise the MSY objective or increase the fishing mortality.

Overfishing is prevalent in the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The Commission is seeking to reverse this situation, through improved knowledge of resources and management measures, both with member states, stakeholders and at the international level.

The main proposal for fishing opportunities for 2016 as regards stocks in the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Antarctic and in other areas will be presented in October with a view to agreement in the Council in December.

Furthermore, the Commission proposals for the Baltic and the Black Sea will be submitted to Council in August and November, respectively with a view to agreement in October and December.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Animal health

The Presidency will brief the ministers on the state of play of a proposal for a regulation on animal health ([9468/13](#)).

The European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the regulation at an informal trilogue meeting on 1 June. The regulation is expected to be formally adopted before the end of 2015, after the final procedures including the legal-linguistic revision of the text, are completed. It will become applicable five years after its entry into force.

The animal health law aims to ensure high standards of animal and public health in the EU. It will provide a single overarching legal framework with harmonised principles across the sector, which is currently regulated by a series of linked and interrelated regulations and directives.

Indication of the country of origin for certain food products

The Council will take stock of Commission reports regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin for milk and dairy products and certain types of meat, unprocessed foods and single ingredient products.

Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers provides that in December last year, the Commission should have submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council two reports regarding the mandatory indication of the country of origin for:

- types of meat other than beef, swine, sheep, goat and poultry, milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products ([9197/15](#))
- unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food ([9196/15](#))

In April the Commission informed the Council that the publication of these two reports was delayed. Most member states welcomed this announcement and noted that the reports will provide a useful overview of the implications of the mandatory indication of the country of origin. In this regard, while some member states supported the principle of this indication in particular for milk and dairy products, others considered that the benefit of providing this additional information to consumers should be balanced with the cost of the measures for the agri-food sectors concerned.

Eligibility of 2007-2013 rural development programmes

As requested by number of member states, the Commission will present its decision on possibilities to extend the eligibility of expenditure for 2007-2013 rural development programmes.

The programming period for rural development programmes from 2007 to 2013 is due to end on 31 December this year. Several delegations stressed that this deadline should be postponed by six months to enable the full and effective use of funds in member states, in particular those affected by difficult economic situations.

At the May Council, the Bulgarian delegation, supported by many member states reiterated their request for an extension of the eligibility to the Commission.

Eligibility of 2007-2013 fisheries programme

The Council will be briefed by the Greek delegation on its request to extend the eligibility period of expenditure for the Operational Programme Fisheries 2007-2013

Visegrad group

The Slovak delegation will present to the Council the outcome of the meeting of the Ministers for Agriculture of the Visegrad group, extended to include Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, which took place in Bratislava on 18 and 19 May 2015.

The following subjects were discussed during this meeting:

- improvement of the position of farmers in the food chain
- simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- the agreement within the framework of the Forest Europe process.

Plant Health

The Presidency will brief the Council on the International Year of Plant Health 2020.
