Council of the European Union

PRESS

EN

**BACKGROUND**[1]
Brussels, 16 April 2015

# AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council
# 20 April 2015 in Luxembourg

The Council meeting will address agricultural and fisheries matters; it will start at 10.00 on Monday 20 April 2015. The Council will be chaired by Mr Jānis DŪKLAVS Latvia's Minister for Agriculture

As regards fisheries, ministers will try to reach agreement on a general approach on a proposal for a **multiannual management plan for fish stocks in the Baltic**.

For agriculture, the Council expects to adopt conclusions on the **EU position at the session of the United Nations forum on forests**.

Finally, the Council will be briefed on the **mandatory indication of the country of origin in certain food products**, the **Expo Milano 2015** and a guarantee instrument designed with the **European Investment Bank**.

A press conference will be held at the end of the meeting (+/- 14.00)

*    *    *

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

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

*    *    *

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

**Press office − General Secretariat of the Council**
Rue de la Loi 175 − B-1048 BRUSSELS − Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319
press.office@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press

# FISHERIES

### Multiannual management plan for fish stocks in the Baltic

The Council will try reach agreement on a general approach on a proposal for a regulation establishing a multiannual plan for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea (*14028/14*).

This management plan aims to ensure that the Baltic stocks of cod, herring and sprat are exploited in a sustainable way in accordance with the principles of maximum sustainable yield (MSY). It should replace the existing management plan for the Baltic Sea cod stocks (in place since 2007) with a multispecies approach because he stocks of herring and sprat are not yet subject to a management plan. In view of the strong influence that biological interactions and environmental effects have on those Baltic Sea fish stocks, exploitation rates and patterns of these stocks were adapted in the light of improvements in scientific understanding of their interactions and of changes in environmental conditions. In addition, scientific advice indicated that the current exploitation rates for some of the Baltic fish stocks were currently not consistent with achieving MSY.

The proposal will be a test case for a new generation of multiannual management plans designed on the basis of principles jointly agreed between the Council and the European Parliament to resolve an inter-institutional disagreement on the allocation of responsibilities between the Council and the European Parliament under article 43 of the Lisbon Treaty.

A general approach constitutes a political agreement in the Council on proposals for a regulation. The agreement sought on the multiannual management plan for fish stocks in the Baltic will make it possible for negotiations to be launched between the Parliament and the Council with a view to a political agreement between EU institutions. Following a vote in the PECH Committee, the European Parliament is expected to confirm its position in the Plenary session of 27 April 2015.

Ministers had a preliminary exchange of views on this proposal in the January Council.

# AGRICULTURE

### Council conclusions - EU position at the United Nations forum on forests

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the position to be taken by the EU and its member states at the 11th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) which will take place in New York from 4 to 15 May 2015 (*7529/15*).

Those conclusions stresses the importance of the sustainable management of forests and their multifonctionality to address major challenges such as climate change and deforestation.

In October 2000, the UNFF was established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) as a subsidiary body with its main objective being to promote "… the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end…" on the basis of key milestones of international forest policy.

The UNFF has universal membership, and is composed of all member states of the United Nations and specialised agencies.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

**Indication of the country of origin for certain food products**

The Council will be briefed by the Commission on the state of play of reports dealing with the mandatory indication of the country of origin of milk and dairy products and of certain types of meat, unprocessed food and single ingredients products.

Regulation 1169/2011 on 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 on:

- types of meat other than beef, swine, sheep, goats and poultry, milk and milk used as ingredient in dairy products;
- unprocessed food, single-ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food.

**Expo Milano 2015**

The Italian delegation will present to the Council the main events organised for the Expo Milano 2015 key theme of which is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". Expo Milano 2015 will officially open on 1 May.

Expo Milano 2015 is the universal exhibition that Milan will host from 1 May to 31October 2015. Over that six-month period, more than 140 participating countries will show the best of their technology that offers a concrete answer to a vital need: to guarantee healthy, safe and sufficient food for everyone, while respecting the planet and its balance. In addition to the exhibitor nations, the Expo also involves international organisations, and expects to welcome over 20 million visitors to its 1.1 million square metres of exhibition area.

**European Investment Bank (EIB)**

The European Commission will present to the ministers a model guarantee instrument for agriculture prepared in cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB).

The model instrument is intended to help ease access to finance for farmers and other rural businesses. Member states and regions can adapt and use the model to set up financial instruments funded by their rural development programmes under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) – to secure loans for investments in farm performance, processing and marketing, business start-ups and many other areas.