

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL

Luxembourg, 14-15 October 2019

The Council session will be chaired by **Minister Jari Leppä**, minister for Agriculture and Forestry of Finland.

On **14 October** the meeting will start at **10.00** with the adoption of A items, and continue with a first exchange of views on the regulation fixing **fishing opportunities in the Baltic sea for 2020**. The objective is to reach a political agreement later in the evening.

Then ministers will examine and discuss the **Communication on stepping up the EU action to protect and restore the world's forests** on the basis of a Commission's presentation. Forestry will also be the object of a subsequent ministerial exchange of views about the **EU Forest Strategy post 2020**. In this context, an information point on **sustainable forestry** will also be touched on.

After lunch ministers will assess the state of play and next steps of the **CAP Reform Package**, and in parallel will be informed about a joint statement of a number of member states on the future **CAP budget**.

The Council will continue with the Commission informing ministers about the **situation in the main agricultural markets**. During this point the Italian delegation will also provide some information on the damages caused by the **Asian stink bug** to its fruit and vegetables sector.

Next, after a presentation by the Presidency on the outcome of a meeting held on 8-10 July on the topic "**European Bioeconomy Scene 2019**", the Slovenian delegation will inform ministers about the outcome of the ministerial conference "**Strengthening the Transfer of Knowledge for the Progress of Agriculture and Rural Areas**", held in Ptuj, Slovenia, on 23 August 2019.

The meeting will be concluded with various information points on: the management of **wolves**, the consequences of **additional US duties on certain EU agro-food products**, the state of play in the fight against African Swine Fever (**ASF**), and **food safety**.

A **press conference** will be held at the end of the first meeting day around **21.05h** with Commissioners **Hogan** and **Andriukaitis**.

On **15 October**, the Council will resume at **10.00**. Ministers will exchange views on **the EU-Norway annual consultation for 2020** and the **22nd annual meeting** of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (**ICCAT**), which will take place on 18-25 November in Spain. Finally the Council is due to agree on supplementing the existing partial general approach on the **regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund**.

The conclusive **press conference** will be held around **12.20** with Commissioner **Vella**.

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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: <http://nwsr.eu/p/213699>

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

AGRICULTURE

Post 2020 Common agricultural policy (CAP) reform package: State of play

In public session the Council will consider a progress report on the work carried out in the Council preparatory bodies on the Commission proposals for a reform of the Common agricultural policy (CAP) post 2020 ([12693/19](#) + [12693/19 COR 1](#)). Ministers will also be invited to answer the following question:

- Which are the crucial elements of the CAP reform proposals that in the Ministers' opinion require further discussion?

The Commission proposals

The reform package consists of three proposals for:

- a regulation on CAP strategic plans ([9645/18](#) + [ADD 1](#))
- a regulation on financing, managing and monitoring of the CAP ([9634/18](#) + [ADD 1](#))
- a regulation on a common market organisation of agricultural products ([9556/18](#))

and an impact assessment ([9646/18](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [ADD 2](#)).

The proposed CAP reform introduces a new delivery model that will allow member states more flexibility in the way they use EU funds and will allow them to tailor-make their programmes. Based on 9 EU-wide economic, environmental and social objectives, each member state would have to draw up a Strategic Plan setting out how it intends to meet those objectives while taking account of its needs, using direct payments, rural development and market measures. The Commission would approve each plan to ensure consistency and the protection of the single market, and monitor progress towards objectives and targets using a set of result indicators agreed at EU level.

The Commission proposals also outline new obligations and incentives for farmers in the field of environment and climate action. Direct payments would be conditional on enhanced environmental and climate requirements and member states would have to offer eco-schemes to support farmers in going beyond the mandatory requirements, funded with a share of their national direct payments' allocations.

Moreover, the new CAP would better target small and young farmers, thereby facilitating generational renewal, and would try to foster greater use of knowledge and innovation.

Communication on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests

In public session the Commission will present its communication on stepping up EU Action to protect and restore the world's forests ([11449/1/19 REV 1](#) + [ADD 1](#) + [REV 1 ADD 2](#) + [REV 1 ADD 3](#)). After the presentation, ministers will exchange views on the basis of a presidency paper ([12492/19](#) + [COR 1](#)), and will be invited to answer the following question:

- Are the priorities presented appropriate and adequate in order to achieve the objectives of the Communication, and what are the key actions that should be set as priorities?

The Communication on stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests was adopted on 23 July 2019 as a response to the continued and widespread destruction of the world's forests.

By setting out five priorities implemented through 36 actions, the aim of the communication is to protect and improve the health of existing forests and increase sustainable, biodiverse forest coverage worldwide.

EU Forest Strategy post-2020

In public session ministers will be invited to exchange views on the basis of a presidency paper on the future EU Forest Strategy post 2020 ([12491/19](#)) and to answer the following question:

- The current EU Forest Strategy runs until 2020, and the strategy post 2020 is under consideration. How could an EU forest strategy contribute to addressing the challenges ahead in an enhanced, balanced and holistic way?

The current EU Forest Strategy¹ (EUFS) runs until 2020. The Agriculture and Fisheries Council in its conclusions of April 2019 welcomed the progress achieved in the current EU Forest Strategy and recognised the need for a new one beyond 2020 in order to further strengthen the coherence of EU forest-related policies.

Market situation

As a continuation of the practice at previous meetings of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council, the Commission will be invited to provide an update on the market situation in the main agricultural sectors, with particular emphasis on the sugar, olive oil and table olives, beef and rice sectors. The Commission's presentation will be followed by a ministerial exchange of views in public session.

In recent years agricultural markets faced a number of challenges following in particular the Russian ban coupled with excess supply worldwide, increased price volatility in the wake of the end of dairy and sugar quotas and various outbreaks of diseases such as African swine fever. In response, several support packages were adopted and implemented focusing in particular on cash-flow measures, market stabilisation and production reduction, the better functioning of the food supply chain, and other measures such as the promotion of European agro-food products.

Reports from the Commission's market observatories show that, as from mid-2016, many sectors recovered gradually, notably in the dairy and pig meat sectors. The picture of general stability continued in 2019, but the recovery is still fragile in some sectors and requires further monitoring.

The most recent Council discussion on developments in the most important agricultural markets took place in April 2019. On that occasion ministers welcomed the generally positive economic situation and outlook in the main market segments, but also raised concerns about individual sectors.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

European Bioeconomy Scene 2019, 8-10 July 2019 - Helsinki, Finland

In public session the Presidency will inform the Council about the outcome of the conference "European Bioeconomy Scene 2019", held in Helsinki - Finland - last July ([12539/19](#)). The conference was organised jointly by the EU Commission and the Finnish Presidency, with the aim of raising public awareness and promoting dialogue on the progress towards an inclusive and sustainable bioeconomy in Europe. The objective of the conference was also to update the 2018 EU bioeconomy strategy "A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment", and the Circular Economy Package.

Outcome of the ministerial conference "Strengthening the generation and transfer of knowledge for the progress of agriculture and the rural areas", 23 August 2019 - Ptuj, Slovenia

The Slovenian delegation will inform the Council about the ministerial conference "Strengthening the Generation and Transfer of Knowledge for the Progress of Agriculture and the Rural Areas" (12866/19).

Participants to the conference signed a joint declaration which aims at providing guidance and concrete proposals for strengthening the transfer of knowledge and innovation in the agricultural sector.

Serious damages caused by the Asian stink bug

The Italian delegation will inform the Council about the damages caused by the Asian stink bug (*Halyomorpha halys*) to its fruit and vegetables sector ([12882/19](#)).

This item will be debated in the context of the public discussion on the market situation.

African swine fever (ASF): State of play

In public session the Commission will inform the Council about the state of play of the disease in Europe ([12570/19](#)).

Since the last discussion on African swine fever in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of July 2019, the disease has continued to spread and the first outbreaks in domestic pigs were recorded in Slovakia and Serbia. Globally, the disease has also continued to spread reaching the Philippines and South Korea.

Joint declaration on African swine fever

On behalf of the Visegrad group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia, the Czech Republic will present a joint declaration on "Combating African swine fever in the European Union" ([12881/19](#)).

This item will be debated in the context of the public presentation by the Commission on the state of play of the fight against African swine fever.

Food safety: State of play on the major issues

In public session the Commission will inform the Council about the state of play of the major issues in the field of food safety ([12861/19](#)).

The Commission's report will focus in particular on: official controls and crisis management, animal health, animal welfare, plant health, food waste, and risk assessment in the food chain.

Sustainable forestry

On behalf of the Visegrad group, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia, the Czech Republic will present a joint declaration on "Forests, sustainable forest management and adaptation to climate change" ([12883/19](#)).

This item will be debated in the context of the public discussion on the EU Forest Strategy post-2020.

US additional duties on certain EU agro-food products

The Italian delegation will draw the Council attention to the recent announcement of the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) that it would impose additional duties on a list of EU agro-food products as of 18 October 2019 ([12884/19](#)).

In light of the projected negative impact on European agriculture, Italy will call the Commission to consider a series of measures to avoid market disturbance and protect European farmers.

Airbus-Boeing WTO dispute: consequences for the EU agro-food sector

The Spanish delegation will also draw the Council attention to the imminent duties on a list of EU agro-food products announced by the US authorities as a consequence of a WTO ruling on a EU-US dispute in the aviation sector ([12885/19](#)).

Spain will encourage the EU to intensify its actions in order to promote the development of stable and rules-based international trade on a global level, and to take action to reassure European farmers.

CAP budget

On behalf of Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain, the French delegation will present a common paper on the need to maintain the budget for the CAP at the current EU-27 level in current prices also under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (12894/19).

This item will be debated in the context of the public discussion on the CAP reform.

FISHERIES

Fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2020

Ministers are due to reach a political agreement on next year's fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in the Baltic Sea.

The discussions will be based on a Commission proposal ([11814/19](#) + [11814/19 ADD 1](#)) the objective of which is to fix total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas for member states, for the ten commercially most important fish stocks in the Baltic Sea in 2020.

In particular, the Commission proposes to increase catch limits for herring in the Gulf of Riga, and maintain the same levels for salmon in the Gulf of Finland. For the remaining stocks covered by the proposal the Commission proposes to decrease the number of catches.

The proposed TACS are based on the available scientific advice provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), and the [multiannual fisheries management plan for the Baltic sea](#).

The fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2020 should be available for the member states as of 1 January next year.

According to article 43(3) of the Lisbon Treaty it is incumbent upon the Council only to adopt measures on the fixing and allocation of fishing opportunities in the framework of the common fisheries policy (CFP). The European Parliament's participation and the Economic and Social Committee's opinion are therefore not required in this case. Preparatory work is nonetheless carried out at regional level by BALTFISH, a body providing a platform for discussion on important fisheries issues in the Baltic Sea, which is currently under Finland's chairmanship.

EU/Norway: annual consultations for 2020

The EU-Norway bilateral Fisheries Agreement dates back to 1980 and covers joint stocks in the North Sea, some of which are jointly managed. For these jointly-managed stocks the EU and Norway have to agree annual TACs. There are joint long-term management plans for cod, haddock, herring, saithe and whiting and basic principles for a long-term management plan for plaice. A ten-year agreement with Norway on mackerel concluded in January 2010 includes mutual access in the North Sea.

The Council will therefore have the usual exchange of views to prepare the annual consultations with Norway, which are expected to take place in London on 18-22 November, followed by a second round in Bergen on 2-6 December.

As for the upcoming 2020 consultation, the main themes will concern:

- the detailed management arrangements (TACs and quotas) for the jointly-managed fish stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak,
- the recent ICES advice on North Sea cod which gives a very pessimistic picture of the situation of the stock for 2020,

- the exchange of reciprocal fishing opportunities, including fishing opportunities for Arcto-Norwegian cod in Norwegian waters.

This year's consultations will have to take account of a range of elements such as: the recent entry into force of the multiannual plan for the management of demersal stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak ("North Sea MAP"), the potential modification of EU's fishing opportunities in the framework of the EU-Greenland Agreement, and the future bilateral relations in terms of fishery between Norway and the UK, in a future Brexit scenario.

ICCAT 22nd annual meeting, 18-25 November 2019 - Palma de Mallorca, Spain

The European Community is part of the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas - which established the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) - since 9 June 1986. ICCAT is responsible for the adoption of measures designed to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of the fishery resources and safeguard of the marine eco-systems. More specifically, ICCAT is responsible for fixing, each year, fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in EU waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters.

At the Council ministers will exchange views on the position to be taken by the EU at the next annual meeting of ICCAT, scheduled for 18-25 November 2019 in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

The agenda of the meeting comprises, among others, a review of various activities of the organisation, including the work conducted by the ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS), which in this context makes a series of stock assessments and recommendations to the ICCAT Commission. These SCRS assessments and recommendations traditionally create the focus for the proposals for recommendations by the EU and other contracting parties.

Other important topics to be discussed this year will be the potential need for cooperation with other organisations, a revision of at-sea vessel sighting and inspecting programmes and at-sea and in-port transshipment requirements, rules for chartering and other fishing arrangements, port-inspection schemes and other port State measures.

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

In public session, the Council will aim to reach an agreement in order to supplement the existing partial general approach on the proposal for the next European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) post-2020 ([9627/18](#) + [ADD 1](#) and [ADD 2](#) + note [9631/18](#)).

In June 2019 the Council reached a partial general approach on the EMFF (see [press release](#)), which left aside some issues such as result indicators, delegated acts and the alignment with the Common Provisions Regulation. Ministers are therefore due to finish off the work, on the basis of a Presidency compromise text

The proposed European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, worth €6.14 billion to invest in the maritime economy and support fishing communities, is part of the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, the new EU long-term budget that enters into force on 1 January 2021.

The proposal aims at supporting the achievement of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) including aquaculture, and the implementation of the Union's maritime policy, as well as strengthening the Union's international commitments regarding ocean governance, notably, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development. The proposal identifies four priorities:

- fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources
- contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets

- enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities
- strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans

The EMFF will also support voluntary contributions to international organisations and technical assistance.
