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Agriculture and Fisheries

Brussels, 16 July 2018

President **Juliane Bogner-Strauss**
Austrian federal minister for Women, Families and Youth

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- 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.

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ITEMS DEBATED

Work programme of the Presidency

In public session the Austrian presidency presented its [work programme](#) and main priorities in the agriculture and fisheries sectors.

The objective of the presidency will be to ensure food security and the vitality of rural areas.

In the field of agriculture, the priority of the Austrian Presidency will be to negotiate the Commission proposals on the modernisation and simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020.

A strong emphasis will be placed on improving the position of agricultural producers in the context of the Commission's proposal on unfair trade practices.

In addition, the Austrian Presidency will devote its attention to improving Europe's supply with vegetable protein, implementing the Bio-economy Strategy in the agriculture and forestry sectors, and working on the dossiers on veterinary and phytosanitary matters and forestry.

Concerning the latter the presidency will work on resuming the negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe and on other relevant dossiers such as: the review of the EU Forest Strategy and of EU activities on deforestation, the EU FLEGT Action Plan (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade), and the United Nations Forest Forum (UNFF).

Plant health will be a highlight, in preparation of the 2020 United Nations International Year of Plant Health, together with citizens' trust in EU food policy (transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, as well as transparency of authorisation procedures followed by the European Food Safety Authority - EFSA).

In the field of fisheries, the presidency will lead the negotiations on 2019 catch limits for the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the North Sea / the Atlantic as well as the two-year TACs and quotas for deep-sea species and three-year autonomous tariff quotas for certain fishery products.

Furthermore the presidency will continue the work on the proposal on the multi-annual plans on Western Mediterranean Sea and Western Waters, on the proposed amendment of the official controls regulation and the proposal for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund after 2020.

The presidency will also put a marked emphasis on the external dimension of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

AGRICULTURE

Post 2020 CAP reform package

The Council had a public exchange of views on the Commission proposals for the reform of the CAP post 2020 with a specific focus on simplification and subsidiarity.

The debate was introduced by two presentations given by representatives of the Commission and the Joint Research Centre.

In the ensuing debate ministers were invited to say whether or not they considered that the CAP proposals marked a progress in delivering real simplification for farmers and administrations, as well as true subsidiarity. Furthermore they were invited to give concrete examples of where there was scope for further simplification and subsidiarity.

Ministers generally welcomed the elements of simplification and subsidiarity set out in the Commission proposals, including the use of new technologies in agriculture. They also called for additional efforts to further simplify the CAP and ensure greater subsidiarity. Some took the opportunity to reiterate concerns about the possible additional administrative burden and costs associated with the "new delivery model" proposed by the Commission, as well as specific elements such as: the use of multiple indicators, the annual review of performance, and the new greening architecture.

In this context, national statements asking for an adequate funding of the future CAP were presented.

The Commission presented the CAP reform proposals at the informal meeting of agricultural ministers in Sofia on 5 June and formally at the AgriFish Council meeting on 18 June.

The reform package is worth €365 billion and 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 Commission's proposals introduce a new delivery model by which member states will have more flexibility in how to use their funds and will be able to tailor-make their programmes. A single set of 9 EU-wide economic, environmental and social objectives will be identified at EU level and each member state will have to draw up a Strategic Plan covering the whole programming period, setting out how it intends to meet those objectives, using both direct payments and rural development. The Commission will approve each plan to ensure consistency and the protection of the single market, and monitor the 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 on the front of environment and climate action. Direct payments will be conditional on enhanced environmental and climate requirements and member states will 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 will better target small and young farmers thereby facilitating generational renewal, and will try and foster greater use of knowledge and innovation.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS***– Conditionality in the CAP***

In a public session the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Romania questioned some elements of the Commission proposal for a new enhanced conditionality in the context of the future CAP, and proposed to simplify them. Furthermore they asked to reduce the number of common rules to include only those that are relevant and necessary for all farmers in all member states across the EU and to keep the others as voluntary and more targeted through the introduction of incentives. The aim of these proposals were to achieve environmental effectiveness through a results-based approach based on incentives and targeted payments.

The Commission recalled the need for a common baseline of rules to keep up the EU's environmental ambition.

– Drought in Poland

The Polish delegation informed the Council about the severe drought conditions it was currently experiencing and requested the Commission to adopt exceptional measures to support farmers affected by severe drought.

Several member states reported similar climatic conditions and concerns about the availability of feed and the condition of livestock, and expressed solidarity with Poland. The Commission informed delegations about its initiatives to alleviate the conditions of farmers hit by drought in Europe, including the upcoming approval of implementing decisions to allow for derogations from greening obligations.

– *FAO*

Following up on the announcement made at the June Agriculture and Fisheries Council, the French delegation informed the Council that its candidate to the post of the next director-general of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will be Ms. Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle.

The mandate of the current FAO director-general will expire at the end of July 2019 and the election to appoint a new one will take place mid-2019.

– *African swine fever*

The Romanian delegation informed the Council about the outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF) in the country and the measures taken to circumscribe the disease. Romania also took the opportunity to request financial aid from the Commission and support from other member states so as to prevent the further spreading of ASF in the EU and help farmers from the affected areas.

Member states that took the floor expressed solidarity and supported the Romanian request. The Commission confirmed the extraordinary spread of ASF in Romania and showed openness to consider, subject to budget availability, requests for additional funding to fight the spread of the disease. The Commission also offered further expert and scientific support.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

AGRICULTURE

Integrated farm statistics: new regulation adopted

The Council adopted a regulation on integrated farm statistics and repealing regulations 1166/2008 and 1337/2011 ([PE-CONS 26/18](#)).

The new regulation addresses the shortcomings identified in the evaluation of the European Agricultural Statistics System (EASS) by streamlining and updating the collection of farm-level statistics within a single framework, as well as by allowing for more flexibility for the rapid introduction of new data collections.

GENERAL AFFAIRS

European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP)

The Council adopted a regulation establishing the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP). It is expected that the programme will finance the first capability projects in 2019.

The purpose of the regulation, which is an integral part of the European Defence Fund, is to establish a programme which aims to support the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union's defence industry with a budget of € 500 million for 2019-2020. In addition, the programme will act as an enabler for cooperation, incentivising potential collaborative development programmes. Actions in the context of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) will be eligible for increased funding.

This is the final step of the ordinary legislative procedure, through which the regulation is adopted. The regulation will be published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

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[EU cooperation on security and defence](#)

HOME AFFAIRS**Schengen evaluation**

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Sweden on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of data protection ([11174/18](#)).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Hungary on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of return ([11182/18](#)).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Italy on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external border (Milan Bergamo Airport) ([11183/18](#)).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Poland on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of management of the external border (Warsaw Chopin Airport) (11184/18).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation addressing the deficiencies identified in the evaluation of Croatia in view of fulfilling the conditions necessary for the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the Schengen Information System (11185/18).

The Council adopted an implementing decision setting out a recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2017 evaluation of Portugal on the application of the Schengen acquis in the field of the Schengen Information System ([11187/18](#)).

Prüm decisions - automated data exchange

The Council adopted an implementing decision determining that, for the purposes of automated searching and comparison of DNA data, Croatia is entitled to receive and supply personal data pursuant to Articles 3 and 4 of decision 2008/615/JHA as from the date of the entry into force of the implementing decision ([6986/18](#)).

Prior to the adoption of a Council implementing decision on the launch of automated data exchange, the Council adopts conclusions acknowledging that the conditions for the launch of automated data exchange have been fulfilled.

The Council adopted conclusions on the implementation by Croatia of the general provisions on data protection of Chapter 6 of Council decision 2008/615/JHA, for the purposes of automated data exchange with regard to dactyloscopic data.

The Council adopted conclusions on the implementation by Ireland of the general provisions on data protection of Chapter 6 of Council decision 2008/615/JHA, for the purposes of automated data exchange with regard to dactyloscopic data.

The Council adopted conclusions on the implementation by Ireland of the general provisions on data protection of Chapter 6 of Council decision 2008/615/JHA, with regard to automated data exchange of DNA data.

Prüm decisions - conclusions

The Council adopted conclusions on the implementation of the Prüm decisions ten years after their adoption ([10550/18](#)).

The automated searching and comparison of DNA profiles, dactyloscopic data and vehicle registration data, as well as other forms of cooperation (joint operations, joint patrols and assistance in connection with mass gatherings, disasters and serious accidents), are essential for tackling terrorism and cross-border crime

By the end of the first half of 2018, 24 member states were operational for automated data exchange regarding DNA, 24 regarding dactyloscopic data and 24 regarding vehicle registration data.

BUDGETS

Omnibus regulation

The Council adopted the so-called Omnibus regulation which revises the EU's financial rules to make them simpler and more focused on results.

This regulation will amend the existing financial regulation which sets out the overall framework for budget management, as well as a number of acts governing the EU's multiannual programmes in various fields, including cohesion policy.

See the [press release](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Employment guidelines

The Council adopted a decision on guidelines for the employment policies of the member states ([10464/18](#)).

Since the 2015 revision, the employment guidelines had been maintained stable. They are now being amended to align them with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

TRANSPORT

Interbus agreement – accession possibilities

The Council adopted the decision on the signing, on behalf of the EU, of a protocol amending the agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus agreement) by extending the possibility of accession to the Kingdom of Morocco ([9688/18](#)).

Interbus agreement - aligning the acquis

The Council adopted a decision on the position to be taken, on behalf of the EU, within the Joint Committee established under the agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus agreement). The position concerns the Joint Committee's draft decision which will have the purpose of aligning the acquis under the Interbus agreement with recent regulatory and technical developments in the EU.

Interbus agreement – regular carriage of passengers

The Council adopted the decision on the signing, on behalf of the EU, of a protocol to the agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus agreement) regarding the international regular and special regular carriage of passengers by coach and bus ([9687/18](#)).

EU-Western Balkans Transport Community – Regional Steering Committee

The Council adopted the decision establishing the position to be adopted on behalf of the EU within the EU-Western Balkans Transport Community's Regional Steering Committee as regards the adoption of the Committee's rules of procedure.
