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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Agriculture and Fisheries

Luxembourg, 26 October 2010

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Main results of the Council

*Concerning fisheries, the ministers reached a unanimous political agreement on **fishing opportunities for 2011 in the Baltic Sea**.*

*They had an exchange of views on the **annual consultations between the EU and Norway** and on the **annual meeting of the ICCAT**.*

*As regards agriculture, ministers were briefed on proposed amendments to the regulation on **support for rural development** and the regulation on **direct support schemes for farmers** in the framework of the alignment of CAP legislation with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty.*

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¹ 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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Member

ITEMS DEBATED**Fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2011**

Ministers reached a unanimous political agreement on fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in the Baltic Sea for 2011.

This item will be included, following finalisation by the Legal/Linguistic Experts, in part "A" of the agenda for a forthcoming Council meeting.

The proposal lays down, for 2011, the total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas, representing the maximum quantities of fish from specific stocks (cod, herring, plaice, Atlantic salmon and sprat) that can be caught in the Baltic Sea, as well as the fishing effort limits for Baltic cod stocks. The proposed measures were established taking into account available scientific advice and, in particular, the report drawn up by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF). For cod stocks in the Baltic Sea, catch limits and fishing effort limits are established in accordance with the rules laid down in regulation (EC) No 1098/2007 establishing a multi-annual plan for the cod stocks in the Baltic Sea.

The agreement primarily concerned the total allowable catches (TACs) and fishing quotas for Member States in Community waters of the Baltic region, the main changes to which – in terms of reduction, increase or roll-over of TACs as compared with 2010 – are summarised in the table below.

COMMUNITY TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCHES (TACs) IN THE BALTIC SEA FOR 2011						
		COMMISSION proposal		COMMISSION targets	COUNCIL agreement	Difference from previous year
<i>Latin name</i>	ICES FISHING ZONES	TAC 2010	for 2011	for 2011	TAC 2011	
		in tonnes	in tonnes	in %	in tonnes	in %
		1	2	3	4	5**
<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 30-31 (Gulf of Bothnia)	103.336	91.000	-12%	104.369	1%
<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 22-24 (Western)	22.692	15.884	-30%	15.884	-30%
<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 25-27, 28.2, 29, 32	126.376	91.640	-27%	107.420	-15%
<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Baltic Sea subdivision 28-1 (Gulf of Riga)	36.400	32.660	-10%	36.400	0%
<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 25-32 (Eastern)	51.267	58.957	15%	58.957	15%
<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 22-24 (Western)	17.700	18.800	6%	18.800	6%
<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	Baltic Sea subdivisions 22-32	3.041	3.041	0%	3.041	0%
<i>Salmo salar</i> *	III bcd, except subdivision 32 (22-31)	294.246	250.109	-15%	250.109	-15%
<i>Salmo salar</i> *	Baltic Sea subdivision 32	15.419	15.419	0%	15.419	0%
<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	III bcd	379.955	265.969	-30%	288.766	-24%

Legend: Latin name - English name

Clupea harengus - herring

Gadus morhua - cod

Pleuronectes platessa - plaice

Salmo salar - Atlantic salmon

Sprattus sprattus - sprat

* AC expressed as number of individuals

** a **negative** % indicates a **reduction** in the TAC, a **positive** % indicates an **increase** in the TAC and 0 % indicates a roll-over of the TAC

In accordance with the multiannual plan applicable to stocks of Baltic cod (*Gadhus morua*) adopted on 18 September 2007¹, the Council endorsed a 15 % increase in the TACs in the Eastern Baltic, in view of the marked improvement in the stock status and a 6 % increase in the Western Baltic where the species is still vulnerable.

For herring (*Clupea harengus*), it was decided to increase the TAC slightly (by 1 %) for the Gulf of Bothnia and to maintain a roll-over in the Gulf of Riga. However, TACs are reduced by 30 % for the Western Baltic and 15% for the Eastern Baltic (except the Gulf of Bothnia).

For sprat, a decrease of 24% in the TACs was agreed. However, if appropriate on the basis of new scientific data, an amendment of the TAC concerning this stock could be considered at a later stage.

The European Parliament's participation and the Economic and Social Committee's opinion are not required (Art. 43.3 of the Lisbon Treaty). These fisheries will be open on 1 January 2011.

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1098/2007, OJ L 248, 22.9.2007, p. 1.

EU/ Norway - annual consultations for 2011

The Council held an exchange of views on the annual consultations between the EU and Norway under their bilateral fisheries agreement.

Most of the delegations recognise the interest of this agreement with Norway but would favour a cautious approach from the EU on the level of TACs and other associated measures for the main jointly-managed joint stocks in the North Sea. They would recommend also a cautious approach for other stocks that might be interesting to identify and use for the reciprocal exchange of quotas.

The first round of consultations with Norway will take place from 16 to 19 November in Brussels.

The 1980 bilateral fisheries agreement between the EC and Norway covers joint stocks in the North Sea, some jointly-managed, others not. Annual TACs are set jointly by the EC and Norway for the jointly-managed joint stocks. There are joint long-term management plans for cod, haddock, herring and saithe and basic principles for a long-term management plan for plaice, based on the EU long-term management plan for sole and plaice in the North Sea (Regulation (EC) 676/2007). A ten-year agreement with Norway on mackerel was agreed in January 2010, including mutual access in the North Sea. This agreement is contingent on a satisfactory overall bilateral agreement. The reciprocal exchange of quotas needs to be in overall balance across the agreement.

Annual meeting of the ICCAT

The ministers held an exchange of views as regards the annual meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) from 17 to 27 November in Paris.

A large majority of delegations that intervened recalled that the EU, as a contracting party of ICCAT, is already part of the ICCAT long-term bluefin tuna recovery plan which has the objective of recovery of the stock by 2022 with 60% probability provided the TAC remains at 13500t/year and that the plan is fully complied with. The ICCAT scientific advice suggests that the stock is recovering in line with the plan. These delegations therefore did not see any reason to reduce the TAC as suggested by the Commissioner in order to increase the probability of recovery.

In preparation for the ICCAT meeting in 2008, the Council adopted a decision for the establishment of the Community position in the ICCAT ([14863/08](#)). The Commission will propose shortly a renewal of this position for the 2010 meeting, with regards to part concerning bluefin tuna (paragraph 2.2 of the annex originally limited to 2008 and 2009). This paragraph defines Community action to limit fleet overcapacity and implement reductions in the fishing seasons, the limitation of derogations and the control measures to be undertaken. The position will be established on the basis of a recent ICCAT scientific opinion pointing out signs of stock recovery.

The ICCAT is responsible for the conservation of tuna and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. The management competences of ICCAT thus cover, among others, such species as bluefin tuna, swordfish and tropical tunas. The organisation was established in 1969 and has 42 Contracting Parties, including the EU, the United Kingdom and France (the latter two on behalf of their overseas territories). The annual meeting of ICCAT is closely linked to the management of bluefin tuna stocks, which has significant financial implications for the European tuna fishing fleets and tuna fattening farms. This annual meeting follows a meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on March 2010 where it was proposed by Monaco, with the support of the EU, that the level of protection of bluefin tuna be increased.

CAP adaptation to the Lisbon Treaty - Support for rural development and direct support schemes for farmers

- A proposal amending Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) ([14344/10](#));
- A proposal amending Regulation (EC) No 73/2009 on direct support schemes for farmers under the CAP ([14306/10](#)).

These proposals also contain a number of simplification provisions, which follow up on the assessment by the Commission services of the 39 simplification proposals presented by Member States in 2009.

Many delegations expressed the view that alignment of agricultural legislation with the Lisbon Treaty was a complex issue, which required further clarification by the Commission and an in-depth analysis by Member States' experts. As regards the proposed simplification provisions, those were generally welcomed. Several delegations, however, were disappointed that the proposals did not go far enough. They reiterated suggestions for further simplification and urged the Commission to continue its efforts.

These Commission proposals intend to reshape Commission implementing powers in CAP-related legislation and bring them into line with the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty (49 basic acts are concerned). The proposed amendments classify the Commission's existing powers as either delegated or implementing powers.

In the framework of the alignment of CAP legislation with the Lisbon Treaty, two proposals have already been submitted by the Commission: one concerning the distribution of food products to the most deprived persons ([13435/10](#)) and another on the EU's outermost regions ([13575/10](#)). Proposals on the CAP Financing Regulation and on the “single common market organisation” Regulation are expected by the end of 2010. These amending acts will have to be adopted both by Council and Parliament under the ordinary legislative procedure.

As regards simplification, the proposal amending regulation (EC) n° 1698/2005 includes provisions seeking to reduce the number of summary reports from Member States, more targeted use of advisory services, the alignment of non-compliance rules for cross-compliance with those in Regulation 73/2009 and the extension of provisions on support for producer groups to the 'old' Member States.

Simplification elements in the proposal amending regulation (EC) n° 73/2009 concern follow-up controls on minor infringements relating to cross-compliance and the exemption from the obligation to lodge an area declaration for small areas (less than 1 ha).

These proposals will be examined by the Council preparatory bodies.

Any Other Business

FISHERIES

Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation

Ministers were briefed by the Estonian and Latvian delegations on the negotiations during the annual meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) in Halifax (Canada) from 20 to 24 September 2010. The discussions led *inter alia* to a moratorium for the shrimp stock in division 3M. Estonia and Latvia, supported by the majority of other delegations, highlighted the need for better coordination on the spot between the Member States and the Commission in terms of the mandate agreed by Council for preparation of such regional meetings.

AGRICULTURE

Informal meeting of the agriculture ministers

The Presidency provided a summary report of the discussions which took place during the informal meeting of the Agriculture ministers in La Hulpe on 21 September 2010. Based on a Presidency discussion paper, entitled “Choosing today for a stronger CAP tomorrow”, a large spectrum of views on the future reform of the CAP had been heard. According to the Presidency's assessment, those views confirmed the interest of a two-pillar structure for the CAP, with sufficient flexibility in both pillars. Discussions had also shown that the reform should include in particular a better balance between income support and the rewarding of public goods provision, and should take better into account the diversity of European agricultures ([15339/10](#)).

African swine fever

The Lithuanian delegation, supported by several other delegations (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Romania), expressed concerns about the situation of African swine fever in third countries neighbouring the European Union, in particular the Caucasus and the Russian Federation. The intensive trade in live pigs, pig products and feed in the region could allow the spread of this viral disease to the EU. Against this background, the Lithuanian delegation asked for a detailed analysis of the epidemiological risks by the Commission services. The Commission representative said that his services were monitoring the situation very carefully and had already given technical assistance to the authorities in Russia, Ukraine and other countries to combat the disease. Should the disease pass the frontiers, then the EU had the appropriate legal framework and tools to rapidly detect and eradicate it ([14986/10](#)).

Pig meat

The Belgian delegation informed Ministers about the organisation of a reflection day on “The pig meat sector towards 2020”, on 3 December 2010 in the Flemish Parliament in Brussels. As livestock sectors are vital for a sustainable and diversified European agriculture, Belgium would like to bring together experts of the pig meat sector from Member states to explore good practices in this area with a view to extending these at EU level with a long-term perspective. Several delegations welcomed this initiative ([15278/10](#)).

Import tariff quota for raw sugar at zero duty

The Portuguese delegation presented a request for opening of a tariff quota at zero duty for imports of raw cane sugar and for establishing an exemption of import duty for sugar quota for the 2010-2011 campaign, in order to react to the current market situation. The Portuguese request was supported by some delegations (Bulgaria, Romania, Finland and the UK), whereas others (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Austria, Poland, Slovakia) considered such measures to be premature. The Commission representative assured delegations that his services were closely monitoring the situation. If there was a need to act, he was ready to take rapid measures to ensure a balanced functioning of the EU sugar market while respecting the strict conditions resulting from existing EU legislation ([15297/10](#)).

Cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*) in Greece

The Greek delegation provided information on the infestation of cotton cultures by a parasite, the cotton bollworm (*Helicoverpa armigera*). As cotton is one of the main crops in Greece, this infestation causes huge production losses. The Commission representative recognised the serious problems faced by Greek cotton growers and said he would do his best to help the Greek authorities to adopt an adequate aid scheme. To that end he invited the Greek delegation to provide his services with all relevant information. ([15283/10](#)).

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**DEVELOPMENT POLICY****Financial contribution to the European Development Fund**

The Council adopted a regulation fixing the financial contributions for the third instalment for 2010 to be paid by the Member States contributing to the European Development Fund ([15043/10](#)).

EMPLOYMENT POLICY**Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Ireland**

The Council adopted a decision mobilising an amount of EUR 7.45 million under the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), providing support for workers made redundant in Ireland as a consequence of the global financial and economic crisis. The amount is allocated for workers made redundant by the Irish enterprise SR Technics as a result of a decline in demand for aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul due to the reduction in air transport activity. The support measures must be co-financed by the Member States and include, inter alia, training, professional orientation, job-search and assistance for entrepreneurship.
