



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10302/06 (Presse 178)

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**PRESS RELEASE**

2739th Council Meeting

**Agriculture and Fisheries**

Luxembourg, 19 June 2006

President

**Mr Josef PRÖLL**

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the Environment  
and Water Management  
of Austria

**P R E S S**

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10302/06 (Presse 178)

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**EN**

## **Main Results of the Council**

*The Council adopted a Regulation for the **European Fisheries Fund (EFF) 2007-2013** with an overall financial framework of EUR 3.85 billion.*

*The Council held a public debate on **animal welfare**.*

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<sup>1</sup>

- 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.
- The documents whose 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 abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

**Belgium:**

Ms Sabine LARUELLE

Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed and Agriculture

**Czech Republic:**

Mr Jan MLÁDEK

Minister for Agriculture

**Denmark:**

Ms Lene ESPERSEN

Mr Anders MIKKELSEN

Minister for Justice

State Secretary, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

**Germany:**

Mr Gert LINDEMANN

State Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture

**Estonia:**

Ms Ester TUIKSOO

Minister for Agriculture

**Greece:**

Mr Evangelos BASIAKOS

Minister for Rural Development and Food

**Spain:**

Ms Elena ESPINOSA MANGANA

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

**France:**

Mr Dominique BUSSEREAU

Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries

**Ireland:**

Ms Mary COUGHLAN

Minister for Agriculture and Food

**Italy:**

Mr Paolo DE CASTRO

Mr Gian Paolo PATTA

Minister for Agricultural and Forestry Policy

State Secretary for Health

**Cyprus:**

Mr Fotis FOTIOU

Minister for Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment

**Latvia:**

Mr Mārtiņš ROZE

Minister for Agriculture

**Lithuania:**

Mr Jonas KONDROTAS

Acting Deputy Minister for Agriculture

**Luxembourg:**

Mr Fernand BODEN

Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, Minister for Small and Medium-sized Businesses, the Liberal Professions and the Self-Employed, Tourism and Housing

Ms Octavie MODERT

State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research

**Hungary:**

Mr József GRÁF

Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development

**Malta:**

Mr George PULLICINO

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Environment

**Netherlands:**

Mr Cees VEERMAN

Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality

**Austria:**

Mr Josef PRÖLL

Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the  
Environment and Water Management  
Director-General, Federal Ministry for Agriculture,  
Forestry, the Environment and Water Management

Mr Andrä RUPPRECHTER

**Poland:**

Mr Andrzej LEPPER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture and Rural  
Development

**Portugal:**

Mr Jaime SILVA

Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries

**Slovenia:**

Ms Marija LUKAČIČ

Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food

**Slovakia:**

Mr Juraj NOCIAR

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Finland:**

Mr Juha KORKEAOJA

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry

**Sweden:**

Ms Ann-Christin NYKVIST

Minister for Agriculture

**United Kingdom:**

Mr David MILIBAND

Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural  
Affairs

.....  
**Commission:**

Ms Mariann FISCHER BOEL

Member

Mr Joe BORG

Member

Mr Markos KYPRIANOU

Member  
.....

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Roussi IVANOV

Deputy Head of Mission

**Romania:**

Mr Mugur CRĂCIUN

Secretary of State, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and  
Rural Development

**ITEMS DEBATED**

**FORESTS**

The Council took note of the presentation by Commissioner Fischer-Boel of a Communication (10448/06) on an EU forest Action Plan, and held a first exchange of views on the subject. Commissioner Fischer-Boel noted in particular that there were currently 15 million forests owners and that 3,4 million jobs were directly or indirectly related to forestry management. The Finnish delegation stated its intention to table conclusions on this issue under its upcoming Presidency.

In general, a large majority of delegations could support the objectives and the key actions proposed in the Communication. Some delegations insisted on the need to support a larger use of wood as the source of renewable energy, and stressed the multifunctional role of the forests.

This Communication has been adopted following the request of the Council<sup>1</sup> to the Commission to present an EU Forest Action Plan in 2006, and on the basis of a Council resolution of 1998 regarding forestry strategy in the EU.

The five-year Action Plan (2007–2011) consists of a set of 18 key actions which the Commission proposes to implement jointly with the Member States, and which are structured around 4 objectives:

- improving long-term competitiveness, by encouraging research, promoting the exchange of experiences, the use of forest biomass for energy purposes, improving cooperation and training ;
- improving and protecting the environment, through improving the compliance of the EU to international requirements (Kyoto Protocol), and the creation of a European Forest Monitoring Programme to replace the current Forest focus which will end by 2006;
- contributing to the quality of life, notably by working with local communities in planning, creating, managing and using urban and peri-urban forests;

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<sup>1</sup> Council Conclusions on an EU Forest Action Plan, 2662nd meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, 30–31 May 2005.

- fostering coordination and communication, through strengthening the role of the Standing Forestry Committee (SFC) with a yearly work programme, joint meetings between the members of the SFC and the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork<sup>1</sup>, as well as with other consultative bodies like the Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries<sup>2</sup>, and encouraging the use of wood and other forest products from sustainably managed forests.

A mid-term assessment will take place in 2009 and a final assessment will be done in 2012. It also points out additional actions which can be carried out by the Member States according to their specific conditions and priorities, with support from existing Community instruments, although implementation may also require national instruments.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 2004/391/EC (OJ L 20, 24.4.2004, p. 50).

<sup>2</sup> Decision 97/837/EC (OJ L 346, 17.12.1997, p. 95).

**WTO NEGOTIATIONS**

The Council was informed by Commissioner Fischer-Boel, and held an exchange of views on the latest state of play and prospects for the negotiations at the World Trade Organisation. The Presidency concluded by confirming the support to the Commission in its efforts to negotiate a comprehensive balanced and ambitious WTO agreement in accordance with the mandate it received from the Council, took note of the Council conclusions of 12 June and stressed the need for unity.

At the GAERC on 12 June, the Council adopted its conclusions on WTO<sup>1</sup>.

It is recalled that the EU presented its last - conditional offer on agriculture and NAMA on 28 October 2005<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/90011.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/90011.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For further details on this offer see:  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/400> and  
<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1358>

**RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Council adopted by qualified majority, the Cypriot delegation voting against, a Decision laying down the amount of Community support (EUR 69.75 billion) to rural development for the period 2007-2013, its annual breakdown and the minimum amount to be concentrated in regions eligible under the convergence objective (EUR 27.699 billion) (10016/06). The Council also agreed to record in its minutes that the key proposed by the Commission for distributing the remaining rural development funds has been agreed by the Council.

**ANIMAL WELFARE**

The Council held an exchange of views on the Communication on Animal Welfare (5734/06+ADD1). The Council also took note of the Presidency conclusions which summarise the main concerns emerging from a Conference held on 30 March 2006 in Brussels on Animal Welfare. During this Conference, representatives of the Member States, of the European Institutions, international parties and a wide range of stakeholders representing the whole of the food chain, discussed the Communication, which mainly covers the welfare of animals kept for food production. The debate was broadcast to the public.

The Presidency conclusions insist in particular on setting up a European network of scientific institutes and laboratories responsible for questions relating to animal welfare, stress the need for an impact assessment and that the need to legislate shall be based on the results of sound scientific studies which demonstrate necessity and feasibility. Objective and measurable indicators on animal welfare are also considered as a high priority. It is also envisaged for the Commission to investigate possible options for a labelling scheme on animal welfare at EU level. Finally the conclusions support mutual recognition of animal welfare worldwide on the basis of multilateral standards.

The Communication outlines the Commission's intentions regarding future animal welfare initiatives.

On 20 February the Council held a first exchange of views on the Communication on the basis of a questionnaire (see 6083/06). During this exchange of views, a majority of delegations insisted on the need to check the socio-economic impact on the producers and the consumers prior to any modification of the existing minimum requirements; Several Member States agreed on the need for a sound-scientific basis for updating the existing minimum requirements; Several delegations were in favour of an information campaign in order to better inform farmers, retailers and consumers on animal welfare rules and on their application.

At the Council on 23rd January, Commissioner Kyprianou presented the Community Action Plan on the protection and welfare of animals for the period 2006-2010, and indicated that this Action Plan would:

- try to upgrade animal welfare on the basis of scientific standards;
- aim at better informing citizens;
- support initiatives on the issue of animal welfare in international fora, such as the WTO;
- try to set indicators and benchmarks to determine the level of animal welfare;
- encourage research in this sector.

## **BROILERS**

The Council took note of the report presented by the Presidency (10287/06) on a draft Directive (see 9606/05+ADD1) laying down minimum rules of chickens kept for meat production ("broilers") and of the comments made at this stage by several delegations mainly concerning the implementing period, the issue of collecting data before the establishment of an upper maximum limit, the need for a report on the socio-economic impact of the envisaged measures on the sector, and the issue of sanctions. The Council noted that the suggested work plan received the support of a majority of delegations and gave mandate to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to continue the work on that basis, at the appropriate level, with a view to reaching a conclusion during the Finnish Presidency.

The main suggestions drawn up by the Presidency (10287/06) broadly consist of extending the scope of the proposal to cover organic and free range chickens and envisaging the possible setting up of an upper maximum limit - to be defined - of the stocking density to be presented by the Commission, after a period of time during which data would be collected at national level on harmonised standards of welfare (mortality rate, stocking density, footpad lesions...). This upper limit would apply with enhanced welfare requirements. The initial minimum threshold of 30 kg live per square meter for the stocking density remains.

The proposal was presented by Commissioner Kyprianou at the Council in July 2005 (see 10817/05). Since then, the working party of the veterinary experts met several times under the United Kingdom and the Austrian Presidency, and the last report was sent to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Coreper) on 7 June 2006. The Special Committee on Agriculture also discussed the proposal on its socio-economic aspects (7522/06).

The draft Directive sets out a basic stocking density of 30 kg live animals per square metre as well as a number of minimum conditions to ensure animal welfare. Farmers must ensure appropriate access to litter, drinkers and feed as well as proper ventilation. Buildings must have a certain amount of light and there must be at minimum two daily inspections. Any chickens that are seriously injured or in poor health must be treated or immediately culled. These minimum standards are supplemented by detailed record-keeping requirements on issues such as house temperatures, medical treatments administered or mortality rates. Farms that meet enhanced welfare conditions will be allowed to stock up to 38 kg/m<sup>2</sup> as long as inspections at slaughter continue to prove that the animals have not suffered particular welfare problems. The European Parliament issued its Opinion on 14 February 2006.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

– ***Land Life Future of European Farmers***

The Council took note of the Presidency conclusions (10479/06) on Land Life Future of European Farmers - following the discussion on these issues held at the informal meeting of the ministers in Krems (Austria, 28-30 May 2006).

– ***United Nations Forum on Forests***

The Council took note of the written information (9949/06) provided by the Austrian Presidency concerning the 6th session of the United Nations Forum on forests.

– ***Avian Influenza H5N1***

Commissioner Kyprianou provided a written update to the Council on the latest developments concerning the identified cases of avian influenza H5N1 strain in the world and in the European Union. At present the virus H5N1 had been found in wild birds in 13 Member States (Greece, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Czech Republic and the United Kingdom), and in commercial flocks in five Member States (France, Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Hungary). On 9th June, Hungary informed the Commission of a possible case of H5N1 virus strain in a commercial holding in the South (Bacs-Kiskun) and of the elimination of 2300 breeding geese. A total of 400 000 poultry have been killed and destroyed. Romania reported 130 confirmed outbreaks in 18 counties since mid-May. A proposal to extend the import ban on Romanian live poultry and poultry products to cover the whole country has been endorsed by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health, on the basis that the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus has been spreading rapidly in Romania since avian influenza began re-occurring in the country in mid-May. The measures will be reviewed in July 2006.

– ***UN Universal declaration on animal welfare***

The Council took note of a written information (10472/06) provided by the Czech delegation concerning the draft of an Universal Declaration on animal welfare. The aim of the Declaration is to recognize on global scale animals as sensitive beings, which feel pain and stress. Animal welfare should thus be recognized as a part of social development of world nations. The Declaration is a means for improving animals' living conditions in all countries in general. The draft of the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare is to be discussed in order to achieve intergovernmental agreement on the Declaration text for eventual submission to Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) held in New York in July 2007.

– *Sugar*

The Latvian delegation drew the attention of the Council and the Commission to the problems stemming from the Regulation adopted by the Commission on 8 June 2006<sup>1</sup> laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 320/2006<sup>2</sup> establishing a temporary scheme for the restructuring of the sugar industry in the Community (*see 10520/06*).

According to this delegation, the Commission Regulation which shall apply from 1 July 2006:

- imposes on undertakings, exiting sugar production as a result of the sugar sector reform, abnormal obligations which could lead them to stop sugar production without being able to participate in the restructuring scheme; among these obligations, the Regulation schedules that the payment of each instalment (a first instalment of 40% and a second of 60%) of the restructuring aid - of EUR 730 per tonne during the marketing years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 - shall be subject to the lodging of a security of an amount equal to 120% of the instalment concerned;
- gives, according to its Article 12(2), an erroneous interpretation of Article 3(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 320/2006 concerning the restructuring aid to be granted in respect of the marketing year for which the quotas are renounced. The Latvian delegation indicated in particular that the restructuring aid shall be granted in respect of that marketing year for which the quotas are renounced irrespective of the fact whether any financial resources in the restructuring fund are available or not.

Therefore, this delegation requested that the Commission and the Council take the necessary actions to ensure that the implementation rules of the Regulation on the restructuring scheme are fully in line with the agreements reached.

The delegation of the Netherlands expressed its understanding for the Latvian request and asked for greater flexibility from the Commission in order to take account of the concerns expressed by the Latvian delegation. The delegation of the Netherlands while insisting on the need to have a proper security to ensure that all conditions are met by the beneficiary of the restructuring aid, noted however that the requirement was so severe that it was impossible for some firms to comply with.

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<sup>1</sup> Not yet published in the Official Journal.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 58, 28.2.2006, p.42.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel indicated that the lodging of a security equal to 120% of one of the two instalments (40% first and 60% at a later stage) was intended to provide for an incentive to the firms in order to restructure their activity on the basis of a business plan in the most efficient manner and to ensure that the money would be properly spent. As concerns the issue of the withdrawal or postponement of a restructuring application (Article 12), she indicated that the granting of a restructuring aid was subject to the renunciation of the quota.

– ***Poultry and eggs sector***

The French, Greek and Italian delegations supported by a large majority of delegations, asked the Commission to broaden the scope of the current Commission Regulation (EC) No 679/2006 regarding the application of exceptional market support in the poultry and eggs sectors to the downstream part of the poultry and eggs industry - slaughterhouses and warehouses - affected by the loss of confidence from the consumers, and not to limit this support to the egg producers and poultry breeders and suggested the co financing of aid in order to eliminate the surpluses on the market, to cover the storage costs of poultry and the destruction of stocks (*see 10646/06, 10647/06*). These delegations also requested the extension, until the end of July, of the financing of the current measures for compensating the producers following the market disturbances on the European poultry and eggs markets, which ended in April.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel indicated, as regard the extension of the scope of the Commission Regulation (EC) No 679/2006, that an analysis of the situation on the market was currently being undertaken by her services and that a Regulation would be presented at the Management Committee for poultry meat and eggs on 21 June. However she made clear that priority should be given to address the problems in the upstream part of the sector rather than in the downstream. Although she did not deny the fact that the industry currently accumulated the stocks of poultry, she noted that it was not eligible for market support.

She also emphasised that the industry shall take benefit of the good prospects of exports and of the increased export refunds granted in the sector<sup>1</sup> to rapidly get rid of the surpluses. Finally she noted that as there were no serious market disturbances, there was no justification for the extension of the period for compensating the losses made by the producers. However she stated that her services remained open to look at the different requests from Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> At the management committee on 17 May, export refunds were increased of 5 eur/100 kg for whole broilers and for chicken cuts. See : <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/minco/manco/poultry/760.pdf>

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

**FISHERIES**

**European Fisheries Fund (EFF)**

The Council adopted by qualified majority, with the Belgian and the Polish delegations abstaining, a political agreement on the proposal for a Regulation on a European Fisheries Fund (EFF), on the basis of a Presidency compromise endorsed by the Commission (*see 10529/06 + ADD1 + ADD2*). Negotiations on the EFF failed twice previously in June 2005 and May 2006. The legal text will then be finalised by the Legal/linguistic experts. This adoption will provide for the fishers and the stakeholders in the fishing sector with a stable financial framework for the period 2007-2013. The implementing regulation are likely to be discussed from July to October 2006 in order to implement the provisions as soon as possible.

The key changes of the agreement on the EFF are:

- Scope of the Regulation (article 1) : the Community support is extended to inland fishing and fisheries areas;
- The objectives of the Fund (Article 4) mentions now the promotion of sustainable development of inland fishing;
- The financial amounts allocated to the EFF are reduced from EUR 4.96 billion to roughly EUR 3.85 billion following the draft agreed on the financial perspectives;
- Extension of the scope of axis 1: the scope of the support of the Fund (Article 21) is extended to public aid in the framework of rescue and restructuring plans for firms finding themselves in difficulty, in accordance with Community guidelines on the subject; the scope also covers public aid for temporary cessation of fishing activities to fishers and owners of fishing vessels for a maximum period of 6 months during the period 2007-2013, in the event of a natural disaster, closures of fisheries decided by Member States for reasons of public health or other exceptional occurrence which is not the result of resource conservation measures;

- Investments on board fishing vessels and selectivity covers the possible financing for the replacement of engine (Article 24) provided that it does not increase the fishing capacity: the Fund may contribute to the financing for the replacement of engines on fishing vessels - which was not initially foreseen by the draft Regulation - provided the new engine has the same power or less in the case of small scale coastal vessels (12 metres or below), or that the new engine has at least 20 less power than the old one in the case of vessels whose length is above 12 metres and up to 24 metres, or that it has at least 20 less power than the old one and the vessel is subject to a rescue and restructuring plan and changes to a less fuel intensive method in the case of trawlers of more than 24 metres; initially the draft Regulation roughly scheduled the financing of environmentally-friendly equipments and fishing gears;
- Aid for young fishermen (Article 26): the Fund may grant premium to fishers younger than 40 years who can prove they have worked at least five years as fishers or have equivalent professional training and who acquire for the first time a vessel of less than 24 metres and which is between 5 to 30 years old. The premium shall not exceed 15% of the cost of acquisition of ownership nor exceed the amount of EUR 50 000. This measure is new as the initial draft foresaw support only for training measures and training incentives for young fishermen;
- Investment aid in axis 2 (aquaculture, inland fishing processing and marketing of fishery and aquaculture products Article 28): investment aid is now extended medium sized enterprises - instead of micro and small businesses in the proposal - and enterprises with less than 750 employees or with a turnover of less than EUR 200 million. Outermost regions and the outlying Greek Islands are exempted from these requirements;
- Aid intensity (see Annex): Community financial participation has been merged with the public participation of the Member State concerned, simplifying the table on aid intensity and increasing the overall public contribution;
- Balance of entry/exits from the fleet: a joint statement from the Council and the Commission allows the possible reintroduction in the fleet of 4% (instead of 3%) of tonnage corresponding to the exits from the fleet since 1 January 2007 on a reference period 2003-2006. However Member States will only be able to allocate this tonnage for the purpose of improving safety, hygiene, working conditions and product quality on board vessels. Priority shall be given to small-scale vessels;
- Public aids for fishing vessels in outermost regions may be allowed until 31 December 2006 (one year).

The EFF created for the period 2007-2013 will contribute to the necessary reduction of the fishing capacities. The Fund will also help restructuring the sector through a socio-economic measures in order to limit the impact of the declining fishing activities.

The proposal was presented by the Commission on 14 July 2004.

The Fund will intervene on five different axis:

- Axis 1 : Measures for the adaptation of the Community fleet such as aid for owners of fishing vessels interrupting temporarily their fishing activities in the framework of a recovery plan ; investments on board fishing vessels, small-scale coastal fishing;
- Axis 2 : Aquaculture, inland fishing processing and marketing : measures for productive investments in aquaculture, aqua-environmental measures, compensation to mollusc farmers for the temporary suspension of farmed mollusc harvesting when linked to public health issues , support for investments in inland fishing facilities;
- Axis 3 : Measures of common interest: support for collective actions;
- Axis 4 : sustainable development of fisheries areas targeting areas with low population density, fishing in decline or small fisheries communities;
- Axis 5 : technical assistance (evaluations, expert reports studies, etc).

The Fund will have a financial envelope of EUR 3.85 billion under the agreement on the financial perspectives between the three Institutions. The European Parliament gave its Opinion on 6 July 2005.

**AGRICULTURE**

**Alpine Convention - Protocol on mountain farming**

The Council adopted a decision approving the conclusion of a protocol on mountain farming attached to the Alpine Convention, aimed at promoting environmentally friendly agriculture in the Alpine region (10052/06).

**Marketing standards for poultry meat**

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation (EEC) no 1906/90 on certain marketing standards for poultry meat (9434/06).

The Regulation (EEC) No 1906/90, which contains several references to Community veterinary legislation, is amended in particular in order to adapt the references to the corresponding provisions in the new hygiene regulations, as well as other references which are no longer accurate.

The regulation will enter into force on the seventh day after its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.

**Marketing standards for eggs \***

The Council adopted a regulation laying down the conditions of marketing within the EU of the eggs produced in the EU or imported from third countries (9433/06, 10282/06 ADD1).

The Member States have the possibility to exempt from the requirements of the regulation eggs sold through certain forms of direct sale from the producer to the final consumer where small quantities are involved.

The regulation distinguishes two quality classes of eggs: class A, fresh eggs for direct human consumption and class B for use in the food or non-food industry.

The Member States will appoint inspection services to check compliance with the regulation and lay down rules on penalties applicable to infringements.

The regulation will apply from 1 July 2007 and it repeals Regulation (EEC) No 1907/90.

## **Flax and hemp**

The Council adopted by a qualified majority a regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1673/2000 on the common organisation of the markets in flax and hemp grown for fibre and Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 as regards hemp eligible for the single payment scheme (9870/06). The Czech delegation abstained.

The aim of the regulation is to extend until the end of the 2007/2008 marketing year the processing aid for short flax fibre and hemp fibre (90 euros/tonne) and for long flax fibre (EUR 160 per tonne for 2006/2007, 2007/2008, EUR 200 per tonne for 2008/2009 onwards).

The regulation also provides for an extension of transitional additional aid (from 50 euros/hectare to 120 euros/hectare depending on the different regions) in certain regions of the Netherlands, Belgium and France until the 2007/2008 marketing year, in order to continue enabling gradual adaptation of farm structures to the new market conditions.

In addition, it provides for making the cultivation of hemp for other industrial uses also eligible for the single payment scheme, and not only hemp grown for fibre.

It will apply as of its date of entry into force (1 July 2006), with the exception of Article 2 (production of hemp) which will apply from 1 January 2007.

## **Forest Law Enforcement , Governance and Trade (FLEGT) - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. REITERATING the EU's firm commitment to contribute to the sustainable management of the world's forests;
2. NOTING the need for action-oriented cooperation among countries, as well as effective participation of stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable forest management including the need for collaborative action to combat illegal logging, associated trade and corruption;

- 3 RECALLING the EU's Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and the recent adoption of a Council Regulation<sup>1</sup> on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community;
- 4 ACKNOWLEDGING the great value of regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (FLEG) processes co-organised by the World Bank, in order to address the complex and urgent issue of illegal logging, associated trade and corruption;
5. WELCOMING the outcome of the Europe and North Asia (ENA) FLEG Ministerial Conference which took place in St. Petersburg from 22 to 25 November 2005, bringing together nearly 300 participants from 48 countries representing governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations;
6. ASSOCIATES ITSELF with the St Petersburg Ministerial Declaration on Forest Law Enforcement and Governance, as well as the Indicative List of Actions included in the Annex to the Declaration."

### **RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Bulgaria and Romania - Rural development adaptation package - EU enlargement**

The Council adopted a rural development adaptation package with a view to the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. The package consist of:

- a regulation adopting regulation 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (9248/06).

Regulation 1698/2005<sup>2</sup> introduced general rules governing Community support for rural development policy for the period 2007 to 2013 and established priorities and measures for rural development. Those rules and measures have to be adapted to allow their implementation in Bulgaria and Romania as from the date of their accession to the EU; and

- two decisions adapting the act of accession of Bulgaria and Romania as regards rural development (9605/06 and 9608/06).

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<sup>1</sup> O.J L 347, 30.12.2005, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

**INTERNAL MARKET**

**Motor vehicles - Type-approval system**

The Council agreed on a common approach with a view to adopting a decision on the accession of the Community to United Nations economic commission for Europe (UN/ECE) regulation 107 on uniform provisions concerning the approval of category M2 or M3 vehicles with regard to their general construction (7884/1/06). The draft decision will be forwarded to the European Parliament for its assent.

The main purpose of the UN/ECE regulation is to establish harmonised technical prescriptions, thereby avoiding the creation of technical barriers to trade in motor vehicles between the contracting parties, while ensuring a high level of safety and environmental protection.

The decision will enable the Commission to vote in favour of the draft regulations at a forthcoming meeting of the UN/ECE forum for harmonisation of vehicle regulations.

**TRADE POLICY**

**Anti-dumping - Japan - Television camera systems**

The Council adopted a regulation amending regulation 2042/2000 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of television camera systems originating in Japan (9736/06).

**TRANSPARENCY**

**Public access to documents**

The Council adopted:

- the reply to confirmatory application 23/c/01/06, the Swedish delegation voting against (8873/06);
- the reply to confirmatory application 24/c/01/06 (9525/06).