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NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

Subject: Work Programme of the Spanish Presidency
– Agriculture and Fisheries

Delegations will find attached the Work Programme drawn up by the Spanish Presidency concerning the Agriculture and Fisheries sector, to be presented to the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 18 January 2010.

Spanish Presidency Programme in Agriculture and Fisheries.

AGRICULTURE

The Spanish Presidency of the Agriculture Council will conduct the works under the slogan “***Food and Agriculture: a strategic sector for Europe***”, which is intended to emphasize that food and agriculture are strategic sectors because of:

- Their ability to supply wholesome, safe and quality food in order to face the world food challenge and to avoid a high degree of external food dependency.
- Their potential to generate employment and to promote economic growth within a new model of sustainable economy.
- Their contribution to the challenge of preserving the environment, the conservation of biodiversity and land, and the fight against climate change.

For all these reasons, the priorities of the Spanish Presidency of Agriculture Council are:

- The Future of the CAP beyond 2013: “*Horizon 2020*”.
- The Competitiveness of agriculture and the agro-food industry.
- The role of women in rural areas

The Future of the CAP beyond 2013. “*Horizon 2020*”

With the Health check agreements concluded and their first steps applied, Spain is taking on the Presidency of European Union during a decisive semester for continuing the debate over the Common Agricultural Policy.

There are several issues to bear in mind during the Spanish Presidency which will inform the discussion on the future of the CAP: the food crisis and global food security, the development of Doha Round negotiations, and the commitments regarding the fight against climate change and the preservation of resources and biodiversity.

The objectives of the CAP have been reaffirmed by the Treaty of Lisbon and therefore they are still valid: maintaining a sustainable agricultural activity in all territory while conserving the environment and the landscape; supplying safe and quality food; and contributing to sustainable development. Furthermore, the CAP has a European common “added value” and it has also played a main role in the EU consolidation process.

The Spanish Presidency will pursue the discussion on issues such as market management measures and crisis situations in order to continue the work done under previous Presidencies. An overall reflection on the future of the CAP will be launched during the Informal Council to continue this debate already opened.

Competitiveness of Agriculture and the Agro-Food Industry

The Spanish Presidency will promote the Council initiatives relating to the competitiveness of agriculture and the agro-food industry. Also, special attention will be paid to the work carried out by the High Level Group on the Competitiveness of the agro-food industry.

The agro-food industry is an important economic driver inside Europe. In addition, this sector also contributes to innovation and development as well as to economic growth and employment within the Community. Nevertheless, the European agro-food sector has to improve and to strengthen its presence on the world market. Besides, it is necessary to demand equality with and equivalence to the imported products in order to maintain the European quality standards and to avoid market distortions.

The Spanish Presidency will encourage the Council initiatives under this premise while also supporting the contribution of all economic stakeholders involved in this process by organising conferences at Community level.

The role of women in rural areas

The Spanish Presidency will take into account the value of equality , mainly between men and women, bearing in mind that employment rates among women are much lower than male rates. It is also important to emphasise that only few women are farm holders and these farms are often small and with low profits.

There are several factors that characterise European rural areas. Among them: the increasing rural male population due to a female exodus to urban areas; ageing; deficient services and infrastructures and the difficulty of access to new technologies.

Nevertheless, the role of women in rural areas is very important not only because of the economics of these areas, but also because they contribute to economic diversification and to conserve the environment and natural heritage.

In view of all this , the Spanish Presidency is giving priority to enhancing the perception of the role of the women because there is a need to promote the importance of women in rural areas.

Besides these three main priorities, the Spanish Presidency wishes to work on the following areas:

A better functioning of the food supply chain in Europe

After the presentation of the Commission Communication during the Swedish Presidency, the Spanish Presidency will continue the debate on a better functioning of the food supply chain in Europe in order to increase transparency inside this chain, to enhance the relationships between the stakeholders involved, and to avoid a greater loss of the bargaining power of some of them.

Milk sector

Monitoring of dairy market situation will remain as a major concern under the Spanish Presidency. Special attention will be paid to the Commission's quarterly reports regarding the evolution of the market situation. Discussions on the medium and long term perspectives to be held in the High Level Group set up by the Commission will be monitored with special interest.

Simplification

The Spanish Presidency wishes to continue the process of further simplification of EU legislation. In particular, attention will be given to simplifying cross-compliance in order to benefit not only European and national/regional authorities, but also and especially the producers themselves. In this connection, the conclusions of the paying agencies directors' conference will be discussed further in the Council of Ministers.

WTO/DDA round

As there might be a possibility of reaching an agreement on Modalities of Agriculture and NAMA during the first semester of 2010, the Spanish Presidency will closely monitor the evolution of these negotiations.

Animal health and animal welfare

After the Commission's report on the issue of animal welfare labelling, the Spanish Presidency is ready to discuss further this issue, and will possibly initiate the work on the debate concerning labelling of welfare indicators on foodstuffs.

The work carried out on the proposal for the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes will continue with the aim of finalizing discussions on this matter and adopting the proposal. The Spanish Presidency will also continue discussions on the proposal regulating pet movements in order to reach an agreement with the European Parliament by February 2010.

The Spanish Presidency will welcome the Commission Strategic Report concerning TSEs if it is released during the first semester of 2010.

Forestry

The Presidency will seek to reach an agreement on the proposal for a Regulation in order to establish the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market.

Special attention will be paid to the Green Paper on Forests. The protection of forests against fire, landslides, floods and storms will be of great importance during the Spanish Presidency, especially in a context of climate change and environmental preservation.

FISHERIES

In the context of the EU Council, the priorities in fisheries are:

Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)

Having concluded the open debate exercise on the Green Paper on the Common Fisheries Policy reform at the end of 2009, it will be incumbent on our Presidency to hold the technical and political debates stemming from the Council.

In the debates expected during our Presidency, the successes and failures of the current CFP will be analyzed together with the future proposal for management and conservation of fishery resources taking into account the integration of environmental and maritime policies in order to reach conclusions setting the groundwork for the new approach that this common policy should have.

These debates will be particularly relevant for Spain since they point towards a definite revision of both the relative stability principle and the TAC and quota based management policy, and also lead to a proposal for substantial changes in the CFP's external aspects.

In this context, the Spanish Presidency expects the Commission to present the Conclusions drawn from the stakeholder public consultation that took place with regard to the Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy. This is expected to take place at the Fisheries Council scheduled for 19 and 20 of April 2010. The aim of the Presidency is to take stock of the discussion held in order for the Commission to start preparing the proposals which are due for late 2010 or early 2011.

Likewise, and in line with this objective, an exchange of views on a working document concerning reform options is also foreseen . This document will be presented by the Commission at the Fisheries Council scheduled for 28 and 29 June 2010.

Reform of the Common Market Organization in Fishery and Aquaculture Products

Another point of interest for Spain is the plan of the Spanish Presidency to initiate a debate on the reform of the Common Market Organization (CMO) of Fishery and Aquaculture Products.

Given that the revision work on the application of the current CMO has concluded, under the Spanish Presidency it seems opportune to tackle debate on the CMO's reform and its future and, if appropriate, to consider the opening of a debate in this regard at the Fisheries Council scheduled for 19 and 20 April of 2010.

Multi-annual management plans.

The Spanish Presidency will pay special attention to a number of multi-annual management plans (anchovy, horse mackerel, Northern hake, and salmon in the Baltic Sea).

Eco-label regulation for fisheries products.

Based on the commitment made by the Commission on the occasion of the adoption of the eco-label Regulation, the Presidency expects to undertake the debate on the future Commission proposal in this respect.

Deep Sea Species.

Based on the Commission's commitments the Spanish Presidency intends to undertake the discussion on the proposal that the Commission is due to submit in the coming months. The aim of this proposal is to modify the regulatory framework governing access and fishing efforts in these fisheries.

External Fisheries Policy.

In this field, the Presidency intends to conduct the debates leading to the adoption of a number of proposals, among others:

- Catch document programme for bluefin tuna,
 - Control and implementing measures for NEAFC,
 - Provisions applicable to the CGPM,
 - Memorandum of Understanding with Chile concerning swordfish,
 - Signing, on behalf of the EC, of the agreement for SPMRFO,
 - Conclusion of new protocols with Micronesia, Salomon Islands and Sao Tomé and Príncipe,
 - Amending technical measures applicable in SEAFO
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