



## Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008

# EU bulletin



The first half of Slovenia's EU Council Presidency is behind us. And how should the first three months of work in the area of agriculture, forestry, phytosanitary, veterinary and fishery matters be evaluated? We can say that we have been successful as we have closed a number of important dossiers and achieved significant progress in others.

### Significant achievements

At the first meeting chaired by Iztok Jarc, the Slovenian Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the EU's Ministers for Agriculture reached political agreement on the **simplification of the cross-compliance rules** based on the compromise proposal of the Presidency. The Ministers decided in favour of **increasing national milk quotas** as of the current marketing year, **extending the aid scheme for linen and hemp for marketing years 2008 and 2009** and including the remaining agreed reforms, such as those for fruit and vegetables, sugar etc., in the **Regulation on the**

**common organisation of agricultural markets**. In the area of fisheries policy, the **Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Mauritania**, providing EU Member States with fishing opportunities and this Islamic country with important income, was reached on the basis of intensive coordination between the Member States and the Commission. In addition, veterinary and phytosanitary agreements were reached between the EU and the Russian Federation allowing free trade in plant products. Important progress was also made in the field of veterinary dossiers, such as, for example, the Animal Health Strategy.

### Achievement of the Slovenian Presidency priority in the area of agriculture

The Slovenian Presidency's most important achievement in the area of agriculture is quite clearly the **adoption of Council conclusions on the re-examination of the reform of the 2003 common agricultural policy (CAP)**. On the basis of these conclusions, the Ministers gave the European Commission clear guidelines for adjustments to the common agricultural policy after 2009. The process has not yet been completed, since the Commission still has to present proposals for changes to the CAP at the informal ministerial meeting to be held in Slovenia in May.

### Meeting statistics

In the first three months of the Presidency, there were **58 meetings**

**of Council working groups, 6 meetings of the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA)**, and fisheries, phytosanitary and veterinary issues were addressed at **10 COREPER I meetings**.

**Minister Jarc chaired three regular meetings** of the Council of Ministers for Agriculture in Brussels and **one informal meeting of EU Fisheries Ministers** at which the EU common fisheries policy control regime was discussed. In addition, the Minister presented the Presidency Programme before **three European Parliament committees** and participated in the **plenary part-session of the European Parliament** in which the reports on the increase of milk quotas and the review of the CAP reform were adopted.

### Scope of the Slovenian EU Council Presidency policy area

In addition to agriculture, under the Slovenian EU Council Presidency, this policy area also covers forestry, fisheries, and veterinary and phytosanitary matters. All together, this represents **29 Council working groups**, subdivided according to specific subject areas into a further **73 subgroups**. During the six-month Presidency, the employees of the Ministry and its representatives at the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the EU in Brussels will be chairing **more than 150 different working meetings**.

They also have to carry out a considerable amount of informal work in the form of negotiations and

informal meetings with individual Member States, groups of States and the European institutions.

At the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, all this work is handled by **more than 150 employees, and a further nine experts** at the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the EU in Brussels.

## Agriculture and rural development

### Conclusions adopted by the Council of the European Union regarding the "Health Check" of CAP reform

**By adopting of the Council's conclusions concerning the Communication of the Commission on the "Health Check" of CAP reform from 2003, which the ministers unanimously adopted at the meeting of the Council of the European Union on Agriculture and Fisheries on 17 March in Brussels, Slovenia fulfilled the key priority task set for agriculture.**

*"Although stressed throughout that this is not a new reform, **this is more than a mere technical adjustment.** With these conclusions, the Council is sending a clear signal and is laying down guidelines for the future development of agricultural policy in the period 2009-2013," said EU Council President Iztok Jarc. "With these adjustments we are making the CAP **even more effective and adapting agriculture** to the new global market conditions and new challenges before us. At the same time, the amendments enable us to **preserve the European agricultural model** and **respond to the demands of consumers** and society for agriculture to have a broader role."*

### CAP key adaptations

Concerning direct payments, the Member States may keep or adapt their model of the **single payments scheme** until 2013, allowing for the sensitivity of particular sectors and special conditions of vulnerable areas in individual Member States to be taken into consideration. The Council agrees with the Commission proposal that new Member States may keep the single area payment scheme until 2013.

**Cross compliance** continues to provide the main element of the reformed CAP and is of key importance for ensuring public support of the new policy. The Council points out, however, that the administrative burden for farmers and for public administration should not be increased and should even, where possible, be reduced. The ministers called upon the Commission to examine the possibility of **extending implementation of the statutory management requirements** for new Member States implementing the single area payment scheme.

The Council also points out that significantly **lowering the upper payment threshold** may have adverse effects on farming in some Member States. The Council welcomes the Commission's proposal on introducing **additional measures in the context of Article 69** for specific needs in certain sectors and areas in the Member States.

As far as market measures are concerned, the ministers agree that the CAP should include mechanisms which work as an **effective safety net**.

As for abolishing milk quotas in 2015, provision is made for a "soft landing" approach to ensure a smooth transition and predictability for producers, as well as special measures for vulnerable regions where the abolition of milk quotas would put milk production at risk. The Council invites the Commission to

examine all possible measures in the context of the "soft landing" approach.

In respect of **adapting agriculture to new challenges**, such as climate change, bio-energy, water management and conservation of biodiversity, the Commission should examine all possibilities for the development of risk management measures. New risks require a wider response, one that involves other policies as well as, in the context of the CAP, existing measures for rural development. The ministers especially highlighted the importance of innovation in this regard. They invited the Commission to examine all the possibilities of financing such adaptations, including obligatory modulation.

### Further work regarding review of the CAP

The Commission will present legislative proposals prepared on the basis of the Council's conclusions at the **informal meeting of ministers of agriculture to be held in Slovenia at Brdo pri Kranju in May**. At that time, the ministers will discuss the legislative proposals for the first time. During the final part of its Presidency, Slovenia will undertake to pursue the debate at an accelerated pace on the legislative proposals in the working parties in June. The ministers are expected to adopt the legislative proposals during the French Presidency, and the legislative proposals are expected to come into force on 1 January of the following year.

### CAP 2003 reform and its review

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has changed considerably over the last fifteen years. In 2003 and 2004, with reforms introducing **non-crop specific area payments** in the majority of sectors within the first pillar of the CAP and strengthening rural development policy, a new phase of changes started. Currently, to a high degree support for farmers does not depend on the decisions made with regard to production, thus

enabling farmers to decide on the basis of market flows and contributing to the improvement of competitiveness.

In addition, the CAP has an increased role in **prevention of the risk of environmental degradation** and in ensuring many public assets. Support to producers is subject to compliance with standards relating to the environment, food safety and quality, and the well-being of animals. The **strengthened rural development** policy supports environmental and rural region protection and ensures growth, jobs and innovation in rural areas.

Nowadays, we face rapid changes in the environment and numerous global challenges to which we must adapt. Four years after the last CAP reform, it was time to carry out a "review" in accordance with the political decisions taken in 2003 in order to check whether the measures function properly and consider how they should be adjusted to achieve the objectives and to adapt to new challenges.

#### The "review of CAP reform"

attempts to provide solutions for three main issues:

- How can the **single payments scheme** be made more efficient, effective and simple?
- How should these instruments, initially designed for a Community of six Member States, be kept suitable for **market support** in an increasingly globalised world and in an EU of 27 Member States?
- How should **new challenges**, ranging from climate change to biofuel development and water management and current challenges such as adaptation to new risks and opportunities be faced?

## Ministers for simplification of cross-compliance rules

**On the basis of intensive coordination with the Member States and the Commission, the Slovenian Presidency, at the first Council meeting in January chaired by Minister Iztok Jarc, succeeded in achieving an agreement on amendments on cross-compliance rules. "I am very pleased with the course of today's meeting, since our debate was constructive and intensive. In the end, a compromise proposal by the Presidency was adopted, as well as a political agreement regarding amendments to the cross-compliance rules," noted Minister Jarc after the meeting.**

He emphasised: *"The political agreement we have achieved is important in the context of Lisbon Strategy implementation, since the agreed amendments can contribute to a more efficient and simplified implementation of cross-compliance requirements in practice for both farmers and administration.*

*When discussing cross-compliance, we should bear in mind that we are discussing one of the most important roles of the European agricultural model: protection of the environment and human, plant and animal health. This is what the general public is increasingly expecting from the agriculture. Through today's agreement, farmers will be enabled to perform their role in practice more easily."*

Last spring, the Commission drew up a report on the implementation of cross compliance on the basis of which the Commission was called upon by the Council of Agricultural Ministers to prepare a proposal for simplification of the system. The Commission made the legislative proposal and submitted it to the Council for adoption. During the Portuguese Presidency, the ministers did not manage to reach an

agreement, and therefore the proposal for regulation was adopted by Slovenia for consideration.

### The key simplifications

- The Member States have the possibility **not to make reductions** in direct payments if the reductions due to the breach of cross-compliance requirements do not exceed 100 euros per individual beneficiary in a calendar year and on condition that farmers adopt measures for eliminating non-compliance. This would minimise the administrative burden.
- The **tolerance rate for minor infringements** of cross-compliance rules has been introduced with a view to assuring the monitoring of offenders until the infringements have been eliminated.
- The so-called **10-month rule**, which obliges farmers to keep at their disposal for 10 months any land parcels declared to activate the single payment scheme, has been abolished. The Member States themselves will set a date – which may not be set at a later date than the date laid down for supplementing the application – upon which beneficiaries should keep the land at their disposal.
- In the case of **transfer of land** during the calendar year concerned, a farmer who submits an aid application should be held liable to comply with the cross-compliance rules.
- The new Member States applying the simplified single area payment scheme (all but Slovenia and Malta) will **gradually introduce the cross-compliance system in 2009 and 2011.**

### On the subject of cross compliance

By introducing the common agricultural policy in 2003, farmers'

income position improved considerably. The key part of this reform is the introduction of cross-compliance requirements, which are better known to broader public as the so-called "EU-standards". Farmers who wish to receive payment from the EU budget must respect certain rules referring to environmental protection, health protection of humans, animals and plants as well as the welfare of animals. Any infringement of these rules may result in reducing or even abolishing the right to receive direct payments. Establishing the system of cross compliance has a dual purpose: provision of the sustainable development of agriculture and approximation of the common agricultural policy to the expectations of the general public.

### **Decision to increase national quotas for milk in 2008 adopted**

At the meeting in March, the ministers made the decision to increase national milk quotas by 2 percent. *"The decision is based on the fact that the situation is favourable both in the EU and in the global market, providing a realistic possibility to increase milk production. It is important that the Commission committed to considering the 2% quota increase within the framework of the so-called soft landing for the abolition of the milk quota in 2015," stressed Minister Jarc, adding:*

*"We underlined several times that those sensitive areas in which the abolition of milk quotas could affect milk production, and thus long-term dairy production in these areas, should be protected."*

The proposal for the quota increase was prepared by the Commission on the basis of the autumn requests of the Member States and the report on milk market forecasts. In the preparation of legislative proposals within the CAP review, the Commission will foresee a

**comprehensive solution** for the milk sector and **examine other measures** for the soft landing, such as reduced levies for excess quotas, reduced coefficient of fat correction level, and other measures.

During the 2003 reform, the Commission proposed a 2% increase in national quotas for milk in 2007 and 2008, but the ministers decided to wait for such a decision and to adopt it later on the basis of the Commission's report on the situation and perspective in the milk and dairy product market.

### **Adopted simplification of the common organisation of agricultural markets**

**At the meeting of agricultural ministers in April in Luxembourg, the ministers adopted the amendment to the Council Regulation on the establishment of a common organisation of agricultural markets under point A (formal reception without discussion foreseen).**

It had already been adopted last October when 21 existing regulations on the sectoral common organisation of the markets were consolidated into a single CMO regulation. This time, the regulation will include changes or reforms in the fruit and vegetable sector, processed fruit and vegetable sector, seed sector, beef sector and milk and dairy product sector which had not been adopted during the adoption of the basic regulation. This is a technical (and not content) simplification, meaning a single set of regulations, for example interventions, private storage, import tariff quotas, export refunds and other measures of market price policy. The aim of the Slovenian Presidency is to reach an agreement on technical amendments to the Regulation on the single common market organisation.

### **Wine reform to be included in the regulation**

Last July the European Commission put forward a legislative proposal with a view to carrying out reform in the wine sector in the European Union. The purpose of the reform is to increase producer competitiveness, to conquer new markets and to re-acquire lost ones, to simplify the rules, to maintain the best wine production traditions in the EU, to strengthen the social structure of the countryside and to protect the environment. In December of last year, Portugal's EU Council Presidency succeeded in reaching a political agreement on this proposal. The Slovenian Presidency will provide that this agreement should be put in writing in the wording of the regulation to be adopted in May.

### **Other dossiers in the area of agriculture**

The Slovenian Presidency will also consider other dossiers where it wishes to make considerable progress or even reach adoption during the meeting of the ministers:

- extending the financing of the **Community Tobacco Fund for financing activities of raising public awareness of tobacco risk** aiming at extending the financing for 2008 and 2009;
- **Cotton Sector Reform**, which had to be put forward by the European Commission for re-adoption by the ministers due to the decision taken by the Court of Justice of the European Communities since it did not make an impact analysis of the proposed actions and did not take into consideration certain other important facts.

Both regulations are foreseen to be adopted at the meeting in May.

## PHYTOSANITARY DOSSIERS

The key objective of the Slovenian Presidency is to achieve maximum progress in dealing with the two so-called pesticide dossiers that are included as priorities in the phytosanitary area.

### Decree on placing plant protection products on the market

**This is a politically sensitive dossier affecting the competitiveness of European agriculture and industry by laying down strict rules on the placing on the market and use of plant protection products aimed at protecting human beings, animals and the environment.**

At the meetings of working groups, the intensive coordination of proposals for solutions to individual sets of themes, in particular at the technical level, for example criteria for registration of plant protection products, rules on data protection, provisions concerning the possibilities of substituting active substances with less dangerous one, etc. is under way. The Slovenian Presidency will try to reach a political agreement on the regulation at the meeting of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in May.

### Proposal for a directive on sustainable use of pesticides

The directive lays down rules and measures for reducing risk and dependence on chemical plant protection, training, control and development of necessary Community standards for integrated plant protection. Political agreement on the proposal for the directive was reached during the Portuguese Presidency. During the Slovenian Presidency, we will try to adopt a

common position at the meeting of the EU Council in May.

### Agreement concluded between the EU and the Russian Federation in the phytosanitary sector

**At the end of February, the Slovenian Presidency significantly contributed to the conclusion of difficult and complicated negotiations between the EU and the Russian Federation (RF) in the harmonisation of the wording of the Memorandum on pesticide residues, nitrates and nitrites in shipments of plant products for food which are exported from the EU to the Russian Federation.**

The intensive negotiated procedures initiated in January and concluded in the record time of less than two months, which is a great achievement for the Commission, as well as the Slovenian Presidency and the Member States. The EU thus avoided the frequently predicted prohibition of export of plant products from certain Member States to the RF, which should enter into force by 1 March 2008, according to Russian demands. The harmonisation took place at meetings of agricultural attachés and three meetings between the EU and the RF, in Berlin and Moscow.

Under the agreement reached, the Member States may conclude bilateral agreements with the RF concerning export of plant products for food relating to pesticides residues, nitrates and nitrites. This enables smooth and uninterrupted trade in goods between the EU and the RF. The prohibition of exports of certain plant products currently applies only to Poland, and therefore the on-going discussions on concluding this bilateral agreement with Poland will be continued.

### Directives on the marketing of fruit plant propagating material

### and fruit plants intended for fruit production

**During the Slovenian Presidency, discussions on seed trade and varieties of agricultural plants are being held on the proposal of the reformed version of the current Directive on the marketing of fruit plant propagating material and fruit plants intended for fruit production.**

Substantial amendments refer to simplifying and improving the legislation and harmonising it with the new CAP, especially with the rural development measures. On the basis of in-depth discussion in the Working Group, the Slovenian Presidency prepared a compromise proposal amending the Directive, which is to be discussed by the Working Group in April and May. All efforts are focused on adoption of the act at the EU Council meeting in June.

### Other activities

**Concerning international phytosanitary matters and negotiations with third countries, we would like to highlight the preparations for the third session of the Commission on Phytosanitary Measures within the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention of the FAO to be held in Rome in April.**

Three international standards for phytosanitary measures essential for free circulation of plant products, in particular, products of fruits and vegetables, are in the process of being adopted. They also relate to procedures at border inspection posts, such as sampling performed in official examinations and the reduction in usage of metal-bromide in international shipments.

The Slovenian Presidency coordinates the opinions expressed by the Member States and represents the EU within the framework of the Working Group on crop seed of the Organisation for Economic Co-

**operation and Development** (OECD). Here a discussion and decision-making process is taking place on adopting new or amending existing procedures and methods for official seed certification, on the conditions and manner of exercising the certification, as well as on checking the effectiveness of this international harmonised certification system.

## VETERINARY DOSSIERS

### Progress made in the implementation of the Animal Health Strategy

**The Animal Health Strategy for the period 2007-2013 includes proposals for new approaches to combating and reducing the risk of occurrence of animal diseases in terms of "it is better to prevent than to cure".**

The strategy serves as a basis for future discussions by experts and offers guidelines for political decision-making on how and in what way to maintain a high level of animal health in the EU in future.

This is a politically sensitive file, because all the agents are actively involved in the production process of safe food, from breeders, the industry, the country, down to advocates of animal welfare.

At the level of chief veterinary officers, the Slovenian Presidency has activated three working groups of experts, which in January and February defined key strategic objectives on priorities concerning disease control, financing the eradication of diseases, and the area of trading animals. These strategic objectives will help the Commission elaborate the Animal Health Strategy Action Plan for the period 2007-2013, which will be presented at the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers in June.

### Establishment of procedures for determining the residue limit values of pharmacologically active substances in foodstuffs of animal origin

**The purpose of the document is to limit the exposure of consumers to pharmacologically active substances intended for use in veterinary medicine and their residues in foodstuffs of animal origin. At the same time, however, ensuring a high level of consumer health protection may not impair the availability of veterinary medicinal products.**

The Slovenian Presidency intensively continues to work on yet uncoordinated parts of the document, which we have taken over from the Portuguese Presidency. This primarily applies to the area of determining the residue limit values of pharmacologically active substances used in biocides and reference points for action. The Commission focuses on imposing reference points for uniform actions of all countries in the case of non-compliance in foodstuffs and the harmonisation of import conditions and trading with foodstuffs from third countries within the Community. The Slovenian Presidency will endeavour to reach a political agreement at the EU Council of Ministers in June.

### Other dossiers

The Slovenian Presidency is striving to conclude **the file on the non-commercial movement of pet animals** at the first reading in May 2008. We are dealing with a politically sensitive dossier, as it refers to the movement of pets. This is a proposal harmonising the rules on non-commercial movement of pet animals adopted in 2003. At that time, obligatory passports for cats and dogs were introduced certifying anti-rabies vaccination. Certain countries have taken additional measures

regarding rabies upon the entrance of an animal into their country for a transitional period, ending in July 2008. The Commission suggested that this transitional period should be extended in order to adequately examine the results of these additional measures.

Also in May the Slovenian Presidency will attempt to conclude the amendments to **Council Directive 96/22/EC concerning the prohibition on the use in stock farming of certain substances having a hormonal or thyrostatic action of beta agonists** at its first reading. Under the current arrangements, the use of illegal hormone substances is prohibited in all animals. The proposal for the amendment provides the possibility for their use only in pet animals when this will significantly contribute to improving the animals' welfare or well-being. Furthermore, the proposal also provides for the prohibition of the use of estadiol 17b intended for use in food-producing animals.

The Slovenian Presidency is also submitting for reading the **Report to the Council and the EP on the various systems of rearing laying hens** drawn up on the basis of an opinion from the European Food Safety Authority. The Report follows the objective of improving and upgrading the existing requirements for rearing laying hens, where the Commission does not authorise the extension of the transitional period regarding the transition to new and more favourable rearing systems to animals. Egg producers and certain Member States aim to extend the transitional period for introducing new systems. As this is a somewhat political issue, Slovenia will transfer the matter for consideration from the Working Group to the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Slovenia also assumed the chair of the so-called **Potsdam Group**, which deals with certain bilateral agreements with third countries. The countries in the trio (Germany,

Portugal and Slovenia) divided the third countries between themselves for a period of a year and a half to sign the agreements with. Slovenia also assumed the chair of the group with regard to files with Canada, the Faroe Islands, countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Korea, India and China.

## FISHERY

The priorities of the Presidency in the common fisheries policy field include two dossiers: the Council Regulation on prevention of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and the Council Regulation on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas

### Prevention of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU fishing)

**Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is one of the greatest world threats to the sustainability of fish stocks. Legal fishing has already exhausted 75% of global fish stocks, while IUU fishing poses an additional hidden threat to this disturbing situation. The annual import of illegally caught fish in the EU is estimated at EUR 1.1 billion.**

Therefore the European Commission proposed a regulation whose aim is to abolish trade in fishery products caught illegally. The regulation proposes establishing a system for certification of vessels and establishing a "black list" of IUU vessels and of non-participating states, which refers both to the EU Member States and to third countries.

The presentation of the IUU proposal was carried out under the Portuguese Presidency. The Slovenian Presidency already started discussion at the level of the Council working groups. In slightly over a month,

experts from the Member States completed the first reading of the Regulation by article, while the ministers competent for fisheries will first address the proposal at the April meeting. The discussion will focus on the proposed certification system, on measures to penalise IUU fishing, and on whether the Regulation should apply equally to Member State vessels or only to non-EU vessels. This could lead to important progress in the discussion of the above regulation, which would help reach a political compromise at the Council meeting in June, in the final month of the Slovenian Presidency.

For Slovenia, the file is important in the part referring to combating the import of illegally caught fishery products in the common market.

### Protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom fishing gears

**This proposal concerns the adoption of concrete measures for protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom fishing gears. The aim is to protect marine ecosystems from uncontrolled exploitation, to ensure sustainable management of marine resources and to prevent damage to deep-sea ecosystems.**

The Council working group for fisheries policy completed the first reading of the dossier under the Portuguese Presidency. By working intensively, the Slovenian Presidency managed to complete the second reading, where many reservations have been withdrawn; the most disputable provisions remain those concerning permitted depth and observers on board. Prior to adoption of the Regulation proposal, which is foreseen for the June meeting of the Council of Ministers, the opinion of the European Parliament must be obtained.

### Proposal for a Council Regulation concerning authorisations for fishing activities of Community fishing vessels outside Community waters and the access of third country vessels to Community waters

**The proposed Regulation, which is also a priority file of the Presidency in the area of fisheries policy, will lay down general rules and conditions applying to all transfers of applications for fishing authorisations and their acquisition.**

These rules will unify the procedures for obtaining authorisations for Community vessels in the waters of third countries, for Community vessels in areas covered by regional fishery management organisations (RFMO), and for third country vessels in Community waters. This will not only ensure clarity concerning the conditions to be fulfilled by the Member States and fishermen, but enable the Commission a more efficient and effective management of transfers.

The implementation of this Regulation will simplify the routine functioning of national administrations and the Commission. Furthermore, this proposal determines the general division of competence between the Commission and the Member States.

The reading is very satisfactory and Presidency endeavours to achieve the political agreement and the adoption of this Regulation at the June Council meeting.

## Partnership Agreement in the fisheries sector between the EU and third countries

the Agreement on fishing in the southern Indian Ocean signed by the Community in July 2007.

The Partnership Agreement in the fisheries sector between the EU and third countries is of key importance for both sides. The EU Member States are enabled access to and fishing in the waters of individual countries, the use of port infrastructure (e.g. the agreement with Chile), while third countries receive financial assistance. These agreements are adopted at the Councils of Ministers, who are also competent for granting terms of office and guidelines to the European Commission conducting the negotiations with third countries in the name of the Community.

The EU Council, headed by the Slovenian Presidency, made efforts for a successful conclusion of negotiations with Mauritania, the aim of which was to review the existing Protocol. This Protocol will remain valid for four years and introduces a balance between the scope of fishing opportunities for the Community vessels and financial reimbursement to Mauritania. On one hand, this is a very important fishery agreement for the Community, while on the other the annual financial contribution of the Community constitutes almost a third of Mauritania's annual gross national product. The new Protocol is designed to meet the needs of Mauritanian fisheries through special financial support for the development of its fisheries sector and for scientific advice and the biological condition of the stock.

The Presidency faces another successful granting of term of office for the beginning of negotiations on **cooperation in the fisheries area of the Community and Chile in the South Pacific**. Before being confirmed at the Council of Ministers, the dossier must be confirmed by COREPER; the same applies to the Council proposal for the conclusion of