



Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008

EU informator



Author: D. Mladenovič, Source: STB

Informal Meeting of Agriculture Ministers

WHEN: 25 - 27 May

WHERE: Maribor; Brdo Congress Center

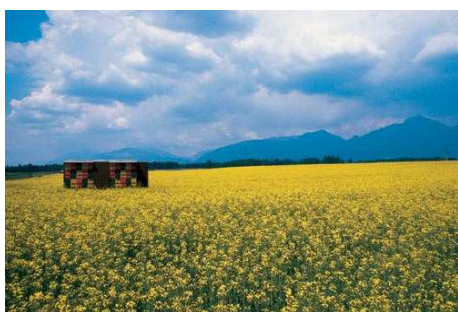
Topic: legislative proposals and future challenges of the CAP

The Slovenian EU Council Presidency's main focus of attention in the field of agriculture is the project of the **'review' of the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP)**. In the first stage of the debate, the agriculture ministers agreed on policy guidelines on individual aspects of the review of the CAP reform, laying down a framework for the Commission for the future development of agricultural policy in the period 2009-2013.

At the informal ministerial meeting of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council, to be held on 27 May at Brdo pri Kranju, the **Commission will present its legislative proposals** to the Member States. On this occasion, the ministers will open the second stage of the debate on the basis of the legislative proposals with the aim of adopting them by the end of 2008. The informal meeting also provides an opportunity to look at the CAP in the wider context and to concentrate on existing and emerging challenges. The Slovenian Presidency has, accordingly, drawn up a Presidency paper as a basis for the debate.

In this document, the Presidency highlights **climate change, biofuels, environmental protection, risk management in agriculture, and food safety**.

Among the most evident changes is global warming caused by increasing greenhouse gas emissions and changes on the surface of the earth. The greatest risks faced by agriculture are water shortages and extreme weather events, increased frequency of diseases and insect predation. All this will affect crop cultivation, stock farming and forestry. Global warming will exacerbate regional disparities in terms of farming conditions and, in some EU areas, will even result in farming being abandoned. This applies particularly to Southern Europe, the Mediterranean, mountainous areas and floodplains. Agriculture needs to respond to **climate change** by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting production to new climate conditions.



Author: A. Fevžer, Source: STB

Biofuels are a new challenge for the EU in terms of both tackling climate change and providing greater energy security. It is necessary, of course, to assess the impact of biofuel production on global food safety and to place greater emphasis on the further research and development of second-generation biofuels.

The increasing world population, exceptional economic growth, heightened demand for biofuels and climate change will have an additional impact on the **environment**. The world faces a

significant loss of biodiversity, and water, air and soil pollution is excessive. Environmental protection is a concern not just for the common agriculture policy, which addresses it through rural development measures and cross-compliance requirements, but for other EU policies, too.

We are witness to rising agricultural product prices, due to both demand and supply factors. High food prices affect producers and consumers but also, to the greater extent, countries with high levels of agricultural product and food imports. In some developing countries, the macro-economic and political consequences of high food prices are already apparent. And this is also a reason why **risk management** in agriculture is gaining in importance.

On account of the aforementioned challenges, **food safety** is becoming an increasingly topical issue. If we wish to solve the problem of a food supply sufficient for a growing world population, agricultural production will have to increase. Specific actions are needed in order to enable an immediate response to the increased demand for food.



Author: Bobo, Source: STB

The Presidency concludes the document by posing **three questions**.

- How can the agricultural sector adjust to these challenges?
- How can we provide quality food at affordable prices while the world population is growing and, at the same time, ensure the preservation of biodiversity, the man-made environment and the protection of natural resources such as water, air and soil?
- To what degree can the envisaged adjustments of the CAP contribute to meeting those challenges?

Turist Elements of the Programmes – Sunday, Monday, 25–26 May

On Sunday, the ministers will visit the **‘Countryside in the City’** event prepared in cooperation with the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia and featuring presentations of wine producers and farms from Slovenian regions and Slovenians living in neighbouring countries. The event will include folk songs and dances performed by the Academic Folklore Group Študent Maribor, vocal group Srake and the Brass Band of Styria. Guests will be able to taste rustic delicacies and Slovenian wines from all three wine-

growing regions. In the evening, they will attend the **cultural programme featuring the band Terrafolk and Symbolic Orchestra** in the hall of the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor.



Author: R. Gabor, Source: Photo gallery MAFF

One of the prides of Slovenia is the **oldest vine in the world** growing in Maribor. In front of the Old Vine house, the ministers will be received by its master, the mayor of the municipality of Maribor, Franc Kangler, and by the Wine Queen of Slovenia, Svetlana Šilec. Mrs Fischel Boel and the ministers will receive a scion (grafting) of the Old Vine, a bottle of wine made from it and the relevant certificate. Entertainment will be provided by tenor Timo Ribič.



Author: R. Gabor, Source: Photo gallery MAFF



Author: R. Gabor, Source: Photo gallery MAFF

On Tuesday, the ministers will depart for Brdo Congress Centre to visit the '**Lipizzaner Ballet**' show before the formal meeting.



Author: Bobo, Source: STB

Ministers, delegates and partners will taste traditional Slovenian food every day. On the first day, the menu will feature **food and wine typical of Prekmurje and Styria cuisine**, on the second day the selection of food will cover the **whole of Slovenia** while, on the third day, they will be served culinary delicacies from the **Mediterranean Region**.



In addition, delegates and partners will visit the Maribor Fruit Growing Centre in **Gačnik**, the **Leber–Vračko animal stock and wine-growing farm** and the Dreisiebnar wine-growing farm. Guests will enjoy the music of folk musicians and singers from Svečina and the dancing of the folklore group of the Svečina Culture and Arts Society. During the ministerial meeting, they will visit **Bled**, go to Bled Lake Island by boat and see the local castle.

Author: R. Gabor, Source: Photo gallery MAFF

Media Info

Media Info, Media Programme and other informations are available on [web site of the Slovenian Presidency of the EU](#).



Meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA)

WHEN: 25 - 27 May

WHERE: Maribor

Author: R. Gabor, Source: Photo gallery MAFF

In tandem with the informal meeting of Ministers for Agriculture, we will also host a meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA). The SCA is a working body which prepares proposals for decisions to be discussed by the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers.

The meeting will focus on the **presentation of environmental impact assessment accompanying legislative proposals in the context of the review of the CAP reform**. In accordance with EU efforts for better regulation, every legislative instrument must be accompanied by an impact assessment to evaluate the impact of the proposed solutions on the issue or area concerned.

The participants at the Special Committee for Agriculture meeting will join the ministers at the **'Countryside in the City'** event featuring the presentations of wine producers and farms from Slovenian regions and Slovenians living in neighbouring countries, folk songs and dances and tasting of rustic delicacies and wines from all three wine-growing regions, as well as attend the **cultural programme with the band Terrafolk and Symbolic Orchestra** in the hall of the Slovenian National Theatre Maribor. They will visit the **'Delicacies of Slovenian Farms' event in Ptuj** where they will be received by Štefan Čelan, the mayor of Ptuj. While the ministerial conference is taking place, they will be hosted by the **municipality of Kranj** and its mayor, Damijan Perne.



Informal Meeting of the Directors of the Veterinary Services of the EU

WHEN: 13 - 16 May

WHERE: Brdo Congress Center

Author: B. Kladnik, Source: STB

Beside the directors from the Member States the delegations of Switzerland, Norway and the Russian Federation participated in the meeting. The directors of veterinary services **harmonised the positions** that will be represented at the **General Assembly of International Office for Epizooties (OIE)** taking place from 26 to 30 May in Paris.

Furthermore, the conditions of the negotiations on the **veterinary agreement with Switzerland and the Russian Federation** including the issues of mutual trade in goods were debated. The Presidency and the Commission used the presence of the delegation of the Russian Federation for the operational bilateral meeting that shall conduct to faster **advancement of the bilateral relations between the EU and the Russian Federation** in the field of trade in products of animal products.

The Commission represented the **Action plan for the implementation of the Animal Health Strategy 2007-2013** which includes the contribution of the directors of the veterinary services defined within three working groups in the period of the Slovenian Presidency. The directors gave the support to the action plan and the agreement to intensive continuation of the planned activities.

In informal part of the meeting the directors of the veterinary services took part in excursion visiting the plant of smoked ham in the Karst, the stud farm Lipica and Piran. Moreover, they tasted the Slovenian typical dishes.



Author: Bobo, Source: STB

23. Conference of Directors of EU Paying Agencies

WHEN: 28 – 30 May

WHERE: Ljubljana, Brdo Congress Center

The Conference is traditionally attended by the Directors of paying agencies of the Member States and their closest co-workers, representatives of the Commission, of the Court of Auditors of the European Communities and of candidate country paying agencies. The main themes of the conference will be the new Commission guidelines for the **certification of paying agencies**, topical **case law** in the field of common agricultural policy and the experience of Member States in **actions before the Court of Justice** of the European Communities, paying agencies' **expenditure on controls** and the **system of electronic applications** for agricultural subsidies in Slovenia. The first two themes will also be discussed in more detail in the workshops. It is expected that the workshop on the new guidelines for certification will provide a solid basis for the meeting of the Commission's expert group to be held in June in Brussels.

Participants will visit the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana for a lecture entitled '**The Contribution of Buckwheat to Resolving Contemporary Nutrition Challenges**'. A themed dinner will be organised in Grand Hotel Union in connection with the lecture and **featuring Slovenian dishes based on buckwheat** (buckwheat bread, rolled dumplings, fritters, spoon bread).

In addition, the Directors of paying agencies will **visit the city of Ljubljana, the Bled Lake Island and Bled castle**. The dinner organised on the day the participants arrive will include **Slovenian wine tasting** with an expert sommelier's explanation, in cooperation with the Wine Society of Slovenia, and **tasting of Nanos cheese**. Lunch in the Brdo Congress Centre will include the **cutting and tasting of prosciutto** organised in cooperation

with the Meat Industry of Primorska. All participants will be presented with a bottle of wine and prosciutto. The formal dinner at the Ljubljana Castle will feature a performance by ethno-folk band Terrafolk.



Author: B. Kladnik, Source: STB

Informal Meeting of Directors – Generals for Forests

WHEN: 16 – 19 June

WHEN: Brdo Congress Center

At the informal meeting, the Directors-General responsible for forests will discuss **strategies for forest management** and the role of forests in **mitigating and adjusting to climate change** as well as the role of **wood products**.

Participants will have dinner at a protocol facility on the **Brič Estate**, near Koper, known for its production of quality Slovenian wines. The Slovenian Forestry Service will organise an **expert excursion to Rakov Škocjan** where there will be a presentation of the long tradition of forest management planning in Slovenia.



Author: J. Skok, Source: STB

Informal Meeting of Fisheries Directors

WHEN: 26 – 28 June

WHERE: Hotel Bernardin, Portorož

Participants at the informal meeting will discuss the **impact of the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty**, with particular emphasis on the co-decision procedure, **on EU fisheries policy**. The new Lisbon Treaty envisages that the legislative documents in the field of common fisheries policy will be adopted by co-decision procedure with the European Parliament. This means that the EU Council will not be able to adopt an instrument unless the European Parliament is in agreement.

The discussion between the Directors General and representatives of the European Commission is expected to clarify expectations about the effects of introducing the co-decision procedure in the field of common fisheries policy, enabling incoming Presidencies to work efficiently in this area.

In the informal social part of the programme, guests will visit the town of **Piran**, have dinner at the **Brič Estate near Koper**, acquaint themselves with Slovenian sea and freshwater fishing at the **Sečovlje Saltfields** and have an **excursion on the Slovenian coast**.