



Brussels, 15 May 2008

BACKGROUND ¹

AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES COUNCIL

Brussels, 19 May 2008

The Council will be chaired by Mr Iztok JARC, Slovenian Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, and Food.

The Council session will start on Monday 19 May at 11:00. The Council will be informed by Commissioner Fischer Boel on the latest development of the WTO negotiations in Geneva and by the Presidency on the evolution of agricultural and food prices.

After lunch, the Council will continue under the “health and consumer protection” heading (Coreper).

In public deliberation, the Council will endorse a political agreement on a draft common position with regard to a regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the market (“pesticides regulation”).

Over lunch, ministers will have the opportunity to exchange views on the “contribution of research in helping EU agriculture adapt to climate change”. Commissioners Mariann Fischer Boel (Agriculture) and Janez Potočnik (Science & Research) will both participate in the discussion [13.15].

The Presidency will hold press conferences at the end of the meeting (+/-17h00).

Public events that can be followed by video streaming:
<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/videostreaming>

¹ This note has been drawn up under the sole responsibility of the Press Service.

AGRICULTURE

HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Placing of plant protection products on the market – "Pesticides Regulation"

The Council should reach a political agreement with a view to adopting a common position, following first reading under the co-decision procedure with the European Parliament, on a regulation concerning the placing of **plant protection products** on the market ([7538/08²](#)).

The Parliament delivered its opinion at first reading on 23 October 2007.

The main political outstanding issues are:

- the possibility, under specific conditions, for a member state to **refuse** on its territory an authorisation issued by member states located in the same zone. The functioning of the system of mutual recognition should be **reviewed** within **five years** (*Articles 35, 39 & 40*);
- the **criteria** for approving active substances, guaranteeing a **higher level of public health** protection while ensuring sufficient **plant health protection** within the Community (*Annex II*);
- an appropriate **data protection** with regard to studies necessary for the renewal of an authorisation, without hampering competition and market access, especially for small enterprises (*Article 56*);
- the **legal basis**: internal market harmonisation rules (Article 95 of the Treaty).

²

The Commission amended its proposal following the first reading opinion of the European Parliament.

OTHER BUSINESS

- World Trade Organisation (WTO)-Doha Development Agenda (DDA) negotiations

The Council will be updated by Commissioner Fischer-Boel on the latest state of play in negotiations on agriculture issues following several informal bilateral contacts taken with the main players during the past weeks.

- The small farm scale - still an important role to play in the future European agriculture

The Council will be briefed by the Romanian delegation on the above reflection on small farm scale.

- Agricultural market situation

With regard to the latest evolution of agricultural and food prices, the Council will have the opportunity to reflect on various factors that influence the capacity of the agriculture to provide sufficient food supply, focusing on aspects relevant to agriculture and the CAP.

- Situation on the milk market

The Council will hear the Lithuanian delegation's views on the situation of the milk market for member states exporting a big part of their milk production to third countries (9276/08). The Latvian delegation will also present its position on this topic.

- Marketing standards for fruit and vegetables

The Council will take note of the concerns raised by some delegations regarding the implementation of the legislation on the fruit and vegetable sector, as far as marketing standards are concerned.

- Draft General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)

The Council will be informed by the Czech delegation of its concerns about the planned review of the Commission legislation on "block exemptions" (exempting certain types of State aid from the requirement of prior notification and Commission approval).
