



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



04.12.09

Agriculture and Rural Development

COM (2009) 651 - Proposal for a Council Regulation opening and providing for the management of autonomous Community tariff quotas for certain agricultural and industrial products

On 20 December 1996 the Council adopted Regulation (EC) No 2505/96 opening and providing for the administration of autonomous Community tariff quotas for certain agricultural and industrial products so that Community demand for the products in question could be met under the most favourable conditions. In view of the numerous amendments made to this Regulation and the transparency policy of the Commission the Regulation should be replaced by this proposal.

Community tariff quotas should be opened at zero or reduced rates of the autonomous Common Customs Tariff duty for appropriate volumes, without disturbing the markets for such products. Discussions at meetings of the Economic Tariff Questions Group showed that the Member States were ready to open quotas for the products covered by the proposal for a Regulation, without disturbing the markets for such products.

Commission temporarily authorises France to grant limited amounts of aid of up to €15,000 to farmers – 02/12/2009

The European Commission authorised a French scheme of an approximate budget of € 700 million which aims at supporting farmers who encounter difficulties as a result of the current economic crisis. Aid under this new scheme can be granted until 31 December 2010 and will take the form of direct grants, interest rate subsidies, subsidised loans as well as aid towards the payment of social security contributions. The French scheme is an application of the amendment to the Commission's Temporary framework for State aid measures to support access to finance in the current financial and economic crisis, which introduced the possibility of granting limited amounts of aid to primary agricultural producers. [Click here](#) for more info



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Promotion of EU agricultural products outside the EU – 30/11/2009

The European Commission has approved measures to provide information on, and to promote agricultural products in third countries. Member States submitted 20 programmes to the Commission to be examined. The 10 programmes that have been accepted are from France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Romania. The products covered are PGI and PDO, wine, fruit and vegetables, meat, spirits, olive oil, and organic products. The EU contribution is € 11.1 million (50% of the total budget of the programmes). [Click here](#) for more info

Fisheries

[COM \(2009\) 650](#) - Proposal for a Council Decision Repealing Council Decision N° 2009/473/EC concerning the conclusion of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the provisional application of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea

On 20 December 2008, the EC and Guinea initialled a new Fisheries Partnership Agreement (FPA) and a protocol covering the period from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2012. The protocol has been under provisional application since 1 January 2009, as agreed by the Parties through an exchange of letters approved by Council Decision of 28 May 2009, pending adoption of the Council Regulation proposal on the conclusion of the FPA between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea.

However, following the tragic events of 28 September 2009, when Government forces opened fire on protesting crowds resulting in over 150 deaths, the Commission decided to initiate the necessary procedures to withdraw its proposal of a Council Regulation on the conclusion of the said Agreement on 20 October 2009, and informed the European Parliament and the Council thereof.

The proposal on the conclusion of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea was withdrawn on 11 November 2009 by Decision of the Commission. According to International Law, the Council must therefore notify, on behalf of the European Community, to the Republic of Guinea the intention not to conclude the aforementioned Agreement.

According to Article 25 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the provisional application of a Treaty shall be terminated if one Party notifies to the other Party with which



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the Treaty is being applied provisionally of its intention not to become a party to the Treaty. The Commission proposes, on this basis, that the Council repeal its Decision N° 2009/473/EC concerning the conclusion of an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters on the provisional application of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Guinea.

Other matters

Six agricultural product names registered - 30/11/2009

The European Commission has added six names of agricultural products and foodstuffs to the Register of Protected Designations of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indications (PGI):

- Italian products "**Fromaggio di Fossa di Sogliano**" (cheese - PGI); "**Marrone di Combai**" (chestnuts - PGI) and "**Aglio Bianco Polesano**" (garlic - PDO);
- German pastries "**Bremer Klaben**" (PGI);
- Polish cheese "**Redykolka**" (PDO);
- United Kingdom, "**Cornish Sardines**" (PGI).

The six names are added to the list of about 850 product names already protected under the legislation on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin and traditional speciality. [Click here](#) to view reference

President Barroso unveils his new team – 27/11/2009

Barroso, President of the European Commission, announced the portfolios responsibilities for the next Commission. The President has held detailed consultations with all the Commissioners-designate in order to assign the right jobs to the right people. The President believes that this team can deliver the agenda for change he set out in the political guidelines he presented in September, following his nomination by all 27 Member States and before his approval as President of the next Commission by the European Parliament.

Responsibilities of the Commissioners-designate

- Joaquín ALMUNIA: Competition. Vice-President of the Commission.
- László ANDOR: Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.



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- Baroness Catherine ASHTON: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security and Vice-President of the Commission.
- Michel BARNIER: Internal Market and Services.
- Dacian CIOLOS: Agriculture and Rural Development.
- **John DALLI: Health and Consumer Policy.**
- Maria DAMANAKI: Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.
- Karel DE GUCHT: Trade.
- Štefan FÜLE: Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy.
- Johannes HAHN: Regional Policy.
- Connie HEDEGAARD: Climate Action.
- Maire GEOGHEGAN-QUINN: Research and Innovation.
- Rumiana JELEVA: International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.
- Siim KALLAS: Transport. Vice-President of the Commission.
- Neelie KROES: Digital Agenda. Vice-President of the Commission.
- Janusz LEWANDOWSKI: Budget and Financial Programming.
- Cecilia MALMSTRÖM: Home Affairs.
- Günter OETTINGER: Energy.
- Andris PIEBALGS: Development.
- Janez POTOČNIK: Environment.
- Viviane REDING: Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. Vice-President of the Commission.
- Olli REHN: Economic and Monetary Affairs.
- Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ: Vice-President of the Commission for Inter-Institutional Relations and Administration.
- Algirdas ŠEMETA: Taxation and Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud.
- Antonio TAJANI: Industry and Entrepreneurship. Vice-President of the Commission.
- Androulla VASSILIOU: Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth.

[Click here](#) for further details

Lisbon Treaty

Implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon – **01/12/2009**



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The Treaty of Lisbon entered into force on 1 December 2009. Here is a brief summary of the main changes:

A single legal personality

On 1 December 2009 the European Community was replaced by the European Union which succeeds it and takes over all its rights and obligations. The Treaty on European Union keeps the same name and the Treaty establishing the European Community becomes the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

A President of the European Council

A new political figure has come on the scene: the fixed full-time President of the European Council. The President's main task is to ensure the preparation and continuity of the work of the European Council – which becomes an institution in its own right – and to facilitate consensus. He will, at his level and in that capacity, ensure the external representation of the Union on issues concerning its common foreign and security policy. The role of President of the European Council is not compatible with other national offices. The European Council has elected Mr Van Rompuy to this post for a term of two and a half years, renewable once.

A High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

The High Representative combines three different functions: she will be at once the Council's representative for the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy), the President of the Foreign Affairs Council and a Vice-President of the Commission. She is responsible for steering foreign policy and common defence policy. She also represents the Union on the international stage in the field of the CFSP. The post is designed to enhance the consistency and unity of the EU's external action. Ms Catherine Ashton has been appointed by the European Council with the agreement of the President of the Commission. She will receive the consent of the European Parliament (when it votes on the Commission as a body). Her term of office (five years) coincides with the Commission's term of office. In fulfilling her mandate, the High Representative will be assisted by the European External Action Service and will have authority over some 130 delegations of the Union in third countries and to international organisations.

A new European External Action Service

The Treaty of Lisbon sets up a European External Action Service (EEAS). It will work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States and will comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services. The Treaty stipulates that the organisation and functioning of the EEAS will be established by a decision of the Council. The Council will act on a proposal from the High Representative after consulting the European Parliament and obtaining the consent of the Commission.



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Double majority (qualified majority) in the Council

Up to now, when the Council voted on the basis of a qualified majority, the number of votes attributed to each Member State was predetermined by the Treaty itself (applying a scale ranging from 29 votes each for the four largest Member States to 3 votes for the smallest). That system will continue until November 2014. From then on, the definition of the qualified majority by which the Council will adopt a large number of its acts (except where the Treaty expressly requires unanimity or a simple majority) will be different: it will then be a double majority so that, in order to be adopted, an act must have the support of at least 55 % of the EU Member States (i.e. 15 Member States in a Union of 27) and at least 65 % of the population of the EU. A blocking minority must include at least four Member States. However, between November 2014 and March 2017, any Member State may request that the current weighted voting system be applied instead of the new double majority system. Note, too, that the Council is obliged to meet in public when it deliberates and votes on European legislation.

Co decision extended

The "ordinary legislative procedure" will be co decision with the Parliament, with a qualified majority in the Council. This procedure has been extended to some forty fields, the most important of which relate to justice and home affairs. Areas such as tax matters, social security, foreign policy, defence, operational police cooperation, etc. will still require unanimity in the Council.

Setting the number of MEPs

The number of MEPs cannot exceed 751 and the breakdown of parliamentary seats between Member States will be degressively proportional. The Treaty also stipulates that no Member State can have fewer than 6 or more than 96 seats.

A new role for national parliaments

National parliaments will have eight weeks to examine draft European legislative acts. If a third of them (a quarter in the field of Justice and Home Affairs) oppose a draft, the Commission must review it. Moreover, if over half of all national parliaments oppose an act subject to co decision, the European legislator (a majority of the European Parliament or 55 % of the votes in the Council) must decide whether or not to proceed with the legislative process. National parliaments may also take a case to the European Court of Justice if they consider that a legislative act is contrary to the principle of subsidiarity.

Citizens' right of initiative

A million citizens may sign a petition inviting the Commission to submit a proposal on any area of EU competence.



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The Charter of Fundamental Rights

The Treaty confers on the Charter the same legal value as the Treaties.

For further reference [click here](#)