



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



20.11.09

Agriculture and Rural Development

The Commission adopts food aid plan for the neediest people for 2010 – 20/11/2009

The Commission published its food aid plan for the neediest people for 2010. Originally designed to provide surplus stocks of farm produce ('intervention stocks') to needy people, the scheme was amended in the mid-1990s to make it possible to supplement intervention stocks with market purchases in certain circumstances. However, this year existing intervention stocks (cereals, sugar, milk powder, butter) broadly cover needs for the 2010 plan, so only limited recourse to market purchases is necessary. The allocated budget of 500 million Euros is the same as for the 2009 plan. This year, 19 Member States have decided to participate in the aid programme, including **Malta**. [Click here](#) to view in further detail.

CAP simplification: Commission to take on further simplification projects – 20/11/2009

The European Commission's Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development issued a report with the reactions to the 39 simplification suggestions which Member States jointly submitted to the Commission in April. The working document provides information on the outcome of the assessment process and a state-of-play on the progress made since March 2009. The report will be discussed during the Agriculture Council in December. [Click here](#) to view the report

Future CAP: MEPs favour maintaining a strong, reformed, common agricultural policy – 11/11/2009

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) can benefit all EU citizens, if equipped to face new challenges such as climate change, food security and water management, but it must be maintained and supported to meet new global demands, agreed most Agriculture Committee MEPs in a workshop on the CAP's future after 2013. The workshop, attended by farm policy experts, was held to help MEPs prepare their position on CAP reform after 2013, which should be ready before next summer.



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Genetically modified maize MIR604 (SYN-IR6Ø4-5)

COM (2009) 613 - Proposal for a Council Decision authorising the placing on the market of products containing, consisting of, or produced from genetically modified maize MIR604 (SYN-IR6Ø4-5) pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council

In December 2004 Syngenta Seeds S.A.S. submitted a request for placing on the market of genetically modified maize MIR604 to the competent authority of the UK. In July 2009 the European Food Safety Authority ('EFSA') gave a favourable opinion in accordance with Articles 6 and 18 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003¹ and concluded that it is unlikely that the placing on the market of the products containing, consisting of, or produced from MIR604 maize as described in the application will have any adverse effects on human or animal health or the environment in the context of their intended uses.

A draft Commission Decision authorising the placing on the Community market of products containing, consisting of or produced from genetically modified maize MIR604 was subsequently submitted to the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health for a vote: 11 Member States (141 votes) voted in favour, 10 Member States (96 votes) voted against and 6 Member States (108 votes) abstained. Consequently, pursuant to Article 35, paragraph 2 of Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 and in accordance with Article 5 of Council Decision 1999/468/EC², the Commission is required to submit to the Council a proposal relating to the measures to be taken, the Council having three months in which to act by a qualified majority, and inform the Parliament.

Fisheries

Commission welcomes ICCAT'S decisive action to save bluefin tuna and other marine species – 16/11/2009

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), which met near Recife, Brazil, adopted a number of new multi-annual management plans which align fishing opportunities with the latest scientific opinions. The European Commission is particularly satisfied with the consensus reached on the recovery plan aimed at Eastern bluefin tuna, whose total allowable catch (TAC) for 2010 has been reduced to 13 500 tonnes (as compared to 22 000 tonnes in 2009). This will be accompanied by drastic cuts in fishing capacity. ICCAT also approved additional management measures for Mediterranean swordfish which will, on the

¹ on genetically modified food and feed

² This lays down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission



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one hand, reinforce the protection of juvenile fish through more stringent closure of fishing activities at the end of the year and, on the other, foresee the adoption of a long-term management plan at the 2010 ICCAT meeting on the basis of up-to-date scientific advice. [Click here](#) for more info

Wide Consensus among ICCAT Parties around EU proposal to save bluefin tuna – 16/11/2009

The international organisation in charge of the management of Atlantic tuna (ICCAT), adopted by consensus a proposal, tabled by the EU, establishing strong measures to guarantee the conservation of Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna. The EU proposed to reduce the annual Total Allowable Catch (TAC), for 2010, from the current 22 000 to 13 500 tonnes. In a plenary session, the ICCAT Contracting Parties unanimously endorsed the proposal.

In addition to the 40% TAC reduction, this will bring about a number of other important changes. First of all, the fishing season for purse seiners will be reduced to one month (15 May to 15 June) and the option to extend the fishing season by derogation for bad weather will be abandoned. Secondly, the EU has asked other Contracting Parties to follow its example and take action against overcapacity aiming for a 50% reduction by 2011. Thirdly, the option to suspend the fishery will remain open in case new assessments show in the course of next year that there is a serious threat of fishery collapse.

After a week of intense negotiations, several proposals on the others species are still being discussed in the last hours of the ICCAT plenary session. But the willingness to reach a compromise is worth noting. It is a clear sign that the international community acknowledges the scale and magnitude of the problem and is ready and willing to work constructively with scientists, environmentalists and the industry to find the best possible compromise that will ensure the sustainable exploitation of this fragile stock and the viability of the industry concerned. For reference [click here](#)

Commission welcomes the creation of a new fisheries management organisation for the South Pacific high seas – 16/11/2009

The European Commission has welcomed the adoption of a Convention for the setting up of a new regional fisheries management organisation (RFMO), to manage non-tuna fish stocks in the south Pacific, in Auckland, New Zealand. This Convention will allow to fill in the large gap that currently exists in the international conservation and management of non-highly migratory fisheries and in the protection of biodiversity in the marine environment in the high seas areas of the South Pacific Ocean. [Click here](#) for more info



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Other News

COM (2009) 622/3 - Green Paper on a European Citizens' Initiative

The Lisbon Treaty introduces a new form of public participation in European Union policy shaping, the European citizens' initiative, which enables one million citizens who are nationals of a significant number of Member States to call directly on the European Commission to bring forward an initiative of interest to them in an area of EU competence.

Before citizens can start exercising this new right, a few ground rules and procedures have to be laid down in an EU regulation. Given the importance of this new tool for citizens, civil society and stakeholders across the EU, the Commission has opened a broad public consultation in order to seek the views of all interested parties on how the citizens' initiative should work in practice. The Commission's Green Paper which launches this consultation, gives an overview of the legal, administrative and practical issues that will need to be addressed by the Regulation and asks a number of questions to which interested parties are invited to respond by 31st January 2010.

Contributions are welcome from citizens, organisations and public authorities.

- If one is answering this consultation as a **citizen**, one can [click here](#) to submit their contribution.
- If one is answering this consultation on behalf of an **organisation**, one can [click here](#) to submit contribution.
- If one is answering this consultation on behalf of a **public authority**, one can [click here](#) to submit their contribution.