



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES



30.10.09

Agriculture and Rural Development

COM (2009) 591 – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A better functioning Food Supply Chain in Europe

This Communication proposes concrete policy actions at Member States and EU levels to improve the functioning of the food supply chain in Europe. The food supply chain encompasses important sectors– agricultural, food processing industry and distribution – that together make more than 7% of European employment. These sectors have a direct impact on all citizens, since food represents on average 16% of households' expenditures. It is thus essential that the food supply chain functions well to provide quality and safe food products at affordable prices.

Food price developments have been raising concerns on the functioning of the food supply chain for some time. The sharp decline in agricultural commodity prices of 2008 has failed so far to fully translate into lower food prices at producer and consumer levels. This has become particularly evident in the dairy sector over recent months.

The Communication identifies significant tensions in contractual relations between actors of the chain, stemming from their diversity and differences in bargaining power. It also highlights the lack of transparency of prices along the food chain as well as the increased volatility of commodity prices. Finally, it shows that the internal market for food is still fragmented across products and Member States.

In order to overcome the challenges identified and improve the functioning of the chain, the Commission proposes to:

- Promote sustainable and market-based relationships between stakeholders of the food supply chain;
- Increase transparency in the food supply chain;



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- Foster the integration of the internal market for food and the competitiveness of all sectors of the food supply chain.

The Commission will report on the advancement of these proposals by the end of 2010. Since the involvement of stakeholders and Member States is essential to the success of these initiatives, it proposes to expand the membership, status and mandate of the High-Level Group on competitiveness of the agro-food industry to create a forum of discussion for the food supply chain.

Commission publishes financial reports on EAGF and EAFRD for 2008 - **23/10/2009**

Every year, the Commission draws up financial reports on the administration of the **European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF)** and the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** during the previous financial year and submits them to the European Parliament and the Council.

The reports covering financial year 2008, which have been adopted by the Commission earlier this week, are now accessible - in 22 official languages (including Maltese). [Click here](#) to view reports

Milk: Commission temporarily allows Member States to pay farmers up to €15,000 in state aid – **28/10/2009**

The European Commission agreed to allow Member States to pay farmers a one-off payment of up to €15,000 in state aid. The move forms part of the Commission's ongoing efforts to stabilise incomes for dairy farmers, but is of course open to farmers in all sectors. The decision amends the Temporary Crisis Framework, adopted by the Commission in January 2009, which already provides for various aid possibilities to facilitate access to finance for EU undertakings. With the Commission decision a separate compatible limited amount of aid of € 15,000 for farmers is included into the Framework. This amount can be granted once per undertaking until the end of 2010. Any de-minimis aid already received since the beginning of 2008 has to be deducted from this amount. Aid schemes put in place under this new instrument will have to be open to all primary producers and will have to complement other general crisis measures already put in place by a Member State. The idea of allowing farmers state aid of up to €15,000 formed part of the Commission's Communication on the milk sector of 22nd July 2009. [Click here](#) for further info



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Fisheries

Coastal State negotiations on pelagic stocks for 2010: a positive outcome and a good deal for all concerned – 27/10/2009

The Commission is pleased with the agreement reached by the Coastal States¹ at the end of last week on management measures for blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring in the North East Atlantic for 2010.

The TAC for blue whiting for 2010 will be reduced to 540,000 tonnes. Whilst this is 11% lower than the 2009 TAC of 590,000 tonnes, it is a much lesser reduction than had been expected. The Community's final quota will be 162,000 tonnes. The Parties also agreed to establish a working group to analyse the current distribution of the stock. Mutual access arrangements for the European Community and Norway remain unchanged but will be reviewed next year.

The arrangement agreed for blue whiting also paved the way for an agreement on Atlanto-Scandian herring, where the Coastal States agreed on a TAC for 2010 of 1,483,000 tonnes, of which the Community will have a quota of 96,543 tonnes.

These two agreements are very much in line with the European Community's expectations. [Click here](#) to view more info

EU is ready to combat illegal fishing – 27/10/2009

On 22 October 2009, following the favourable opinion expressed in September by the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture, the Commission adopted a Regulation establishing the implementing rules for the 2008 Regulation to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. As one of the central pillars of the Community's fisheries control policy, the IUU Regulation will control all landings and transshipments of third-country fishing vessels in Community ports and all trade of marine fishery products to and from the Union.

¹ The Coastal States which are Parties to the negotiations on blue whiting are the European Community, Norway, Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The negotiations on Atlanto-Scandian herring involve five Coastal States, namely the aforementioned States plus the Russian Federation.



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The Regulation to combat the escalation of illegal fishing and to complement the yet insufficient counter measures taken at regional and international level and will enter into force on 1 January 2010. [Click here](#) for more info

Other News

Three agricultural product names registered - 29/10/2009

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

- German pastry **"Schwäbische Maultaschen"** or **"Schwäbische Suppenmaultaschen"** (PGI);
- Italian cherries **"Amarene Brusche di Modena"** (PGI);
- Spanish turnips **"Grellos de Galicia"** (PGI).

The three 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.