

Til

Udvalgets medlemmer og stedfortrædere

Pressemeddelelse vedr. rådsmøde Landbrug den 22. maj 2001 på engelsk

Dette rådsmøde 2348 (8857/01 presse 193) blev behandlet af Europaudvalget på mødet den 18. maj 2001.

Bearbejdet dansk pressemeddelelse for dette rådsmøde vil blive hjemsendt som omtryk til dette bilag så snart det ligger klar fra Rådets oversættelsestjeneste.

Bruxelles, den 25. maj 2001

Med venlig hilsen

Morten Knudsen

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PRESS RELEASE

Subject :

2348th Council meeting

- **AGRICULTURE** -

Brussels, 22 May 2001

President : **Ms Margareta WINBERG**

Minister for Agriculture of the Kingdom of
Sweden

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For further information call 02-285.78.33 or 02-285.68.08

PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium :

Mr Jaak GABRIËLS	Minister for Agriculture and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
Mr José HAPPART	Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs (Walloon Region)

Denmark :

Ms Ritt BJERREGAARD	Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries
Mr Poul OTTOSEN	State Secretary, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries

Germany :

Ms Renate KÜNST	Federal Minister for Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture
Mr Martin WILLE	State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture

Greece :

Mr Georgios ANOMERITIS	Minister for Agriculture
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Spain :

Mr Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE	Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
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France :

Mr Jean GLAVANY	Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries
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Ireland :

Mr Joe WALSH	Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
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Italy :

Mr Alfonso PECORARO SCANIO	Minister for Agriculture and Forestry Policy
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Luxembourg :

Mr Fernand BODEN	Minister for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development
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Netherlands :

Mr Laurens-Jan BRINKHORST	Minister for Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries
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Austria :

Mr Wilhelm MOLTERER	Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, the Environment and Water Management
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Portugal :

Mr Luis CAPOULAS SANTOS	Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries
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Finland :

Mr Kalevi HEMILÄ	Minister for Agriculture and Forestry
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Sweden :

Ms Margareta WINBERG	Minister for Agriculture
Mr Per-Göran ÖJEHEIM	State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

United-Kingdom :

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Commission :

Mr David BYRNE

Member

Mr Franz FISCHLER

Member

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OPEN DEBATE ON ETHICAL ASPECTS OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY**- Presidency conclusions**

For the first time a public and coherent debate on animal ethics was held during the session of the "Agriculture" Council.

During the debate, a number of issues and arguments were presented based on different starting-points. The Council was unanimous in the view that the rules on animal welfare should be tightened.

The Presidency summarised the discussion as follows:

- Animals are creatures that have feelings and that they should be treated with respect and consideration for their health and welfare, not just in farming but also in the stages that follow.
- Animals have an intrinsic value while man holds a special position with a moral responsibility to treat animals well. By fulfilling this moral responsibility, man can prove himself worthy of his special position.
- Animal welfare and aspects of animal ethics should form an important part by drawing up the future policy on agriculture and food.
- Work is to be done in order to strengthen animal welfare within the European Union:
- basing further legislative work on knowledge of the distinctive character of animals and their special needs. The current debate commits everybody, also when it comes to the practical details.
- implementing and checking existing legislation
- taking an active part in the debate on animal ethics
- spreading information and promoting knowledge in the area of animal ethics.

The matter of long and painful animal transport is very urgent and the Presidency therefore intends to come back to this matter at the Council session in June.

BSE

The Council was informed by Commissioner BYRNE on the latest developments in relation to BSE. In particular, the Commissioner provided information regarding the transitional measures that the Commission intends to propose to the Standing Veterinary Committee following the recent adoption of the TSE Regulation, in particular the prolongation of the temporary ban on animal protein in feed and the extension of the requirement to carry out BSE tests.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

The Council noted the information provided by Commissioner BYRNE and Ministers from affected Member States on latest developments in relation to foot and mouth disease.

It noted that the end of the current outbreak appears to be in sight. While there continue to be new cases in the United Kingdom, they now are few in number. There has been no recent case in any other Member State.

It is the intention of the Council to return to the issue of foot-and-mouth disease and the lessons to be learned from the current outbreak later in the year on the basis of relevant proposals from the Commission, as already indicated at the last session of the Council.

HYGIENE OF FOODSTUFFS AND SPECIFIC HYGIENE RULES FOR FOOD OF ANIMAL

The Council noted the progress report from the Permanent Representatives Committee and the comments from Commissioner BYRNE on the state of play of discussions on the proposals on food hygiene.

The discussions up to now have allowed to identify a certain number of key political issues and to clarify several of the technical provisions contained in the proposal. Continued discussions should enable a future Presidency to make suggestions with a view to narrowing differences between delegations' positions.

The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to continue the work on the dossier.

SUGAR

The Council reached an overall agreement on the new common market organisation for sugar on the basis of a Presidency compromise. The key elements of this compromise can be summarised as follows:

- the sugar regime will apply as from 1 July 2001 and will have a duration of 5 years;
- on the basis of Commission studies on the market situation, all aspects of the quota system, prices, interprofessional relations and an analysis of the increased competition resulting from the European Union's international commitments, the Commission shall, in the beginning of 2003, present a report accompanied, if necessary, by appropriate proposals;
- for Southern Italy, for Spain with regard to sugar cane production and for the mainland territory of Portugal, national aids shall be maintained at the same level and under the same conditions reached for the 2000/2001 marketing year;
- because of its specific climatic conditions, Finland is authorised to introduce a nationally funded storage equalisation scheme restricted to the carry-over of its C-sugar. Implementing rules are to be decided in accordance with the Sugar Management Committee procedure.
- The Commission states its intention to take the necessary provisions, including transitional measures, to ensure a smooth transition to the new sugar regime under which the storage equalisation scheme is abolished. In this respect, it will ensure that the sugar that has paid the storage levy up to 30 June 2001, and been marketed after that date, is not penalised as a result of the removal of all storage cost-based elements taken into account at present in the market management instruments .

For the carried-over C sugar, from the marketing year 2000/2001 the storage equalisation scheme shall be maintained only until the end of the corresponding compulsory storage period, as a transitional measure and in principle on a degressive basis. The cost of this measure will be covered by the levies paid by the sector under the self-financing mechanism.

BEEF AND VEAL

In parallel to the Council session, the Presidency and the Commission had bilateral discussions with all delegations on the state of play concerning the proposed amendment of the regulation on the common market organisation of the market for beef and veal, which aims to address the current imbalance of the Community beef market and to promote quality production.

The Presidency, at the end of these discussions, arrived at the conclusion that further contacts are still necessary before presenting a final compromise.

The Council, therefore, agreed to take up its work again on this dossier at its next session with a view to reaching a decision on this regulation.

SHEEPMEAT AND GOAT MEAT SECTOR

The Council took note of Commissioner FISCHLER's presentation of the Commission's proposal to reform the Community's sheepmeat and goat meat regime to make it simpler and more market oriented and first reactions on this proposal from certain delegations.

The most notable change is the introduction of a fixed premium for farmers rather than the variable deficiency payment used to date.

The Council agreed to consult the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee on this proposal. It instructed the Special Committee on Agriculture to examine the proposal and to report to one of its later sessions.

OLIVE OIL

On the Commission's proposal in the olive oil sector, the Council had an orientation debate focusing on the length of the prolongation of the production aid arrangements and on the question of the best time to introduce the new measures for operator's organisations in the olive oil sector.

The Council requested the Special Committee on Agriculture to take note of the views which have been expressed in its preparation of the dossier for the June meeting of the Council. At that stage, having also examined the Opinion of the European Parliament, the Council intends to take a decision on this important proposal and to adopt some conclusions in relation to the Commission's report on the quality strategy which accompanies the proposal.

NUTS

The Greek, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese Ministers informed the Council of the situation in the nuts sector which, in their view, faces serious problems which are likely to increase with the coming to an end on 15 June 2001 of the Community financing of present support measures.

The Council noted the observations and requests concerning the nuts sector made by these delegations and took also note of the response given by Commission FISCHLER.

DISTILLATION OF CERTAIN WINE SECTOR PRODUCTS

The Council adopted a Decision on the granting of exceptional national aid by the Portuguese Government for the distillation of certain wine sector products.

Therefore, exceptional aid by the Portuguese Government for the distillation of 450 000 hectolitres of wine to a maximum value of EUR 0,574 per % vol per hectolitre, to the extent strictly necessary to remedy the imbalance which has arisen on Portuguese territory, will be considered to be compatible with the common market.

OTHER BUSINESS

Circulation of compound feedingstuffs

The German delegation, supported by several delegations, drew the Council's as well as Commissioner BYRNE's attention to the need for rapid adoption of the draft new directive on compound feedingstuffs.

In particular, these delegations expressed their support for the Parliament's amendments, which aim at imposing a compulsory "open declaration" of the detailed list of ingredients used in compound feedingstuffs, and requiring the Commission to draw up before the end of the year an exhaustive "positive list" of raw materials authorised for use in animal feed.

The Council took note of these interventions.

ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE

(Decisions for which statements for the Council minutes have been made available to the public are indicated by asterisks; the statements in question may be obtained from the Press Office.)

AGRICULTURE

United Nations Forum on Forestry - Council conclusions

In preparation of the first session of the United Nations Forum on Forestry (UNFF 1) in June 2001 the Council adopted the following Council conclusions :

"1. The European Union reaffirms that sustainable forest management (sfm) is an integral part of sustainable development. The Council, recalling its earlier Conclusions, remains committed to the implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development Agenda 21 and the Forest Principles and reiterates its support for promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

2. The Council welcomes the ECOSOC Resolution E/2000/L.35, which sets out the goals, objectives and principal functions of the international arrangement on forests and establishes the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and calls for the formation of a Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) between the relevant organisations of the United Nations system and other relevant international and regional organisations, institutions and instruments.

3. The Council looks forward to the first substantive meeting of the UNFF in June 2001, which will discuss and take decisions on the following issues:

(i) Adoption of its multi-year programme of work (MYPOW);

(ii) Development of a plan of action for the implementation of Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF)/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) Proposals for Action, which will address financial provisions;

(iii) Initiation of the United Nations Forum on Forests' work with the CPF.

4. The Council welcomes the work already done within the EU to consider how the UNFF and the CPF should handle the principal functions of the international arrangement on forests. The Council recognises that detailed positions on these functions will be required for UNFF1.

5. The MYPOW should translate the objectives, principal functions and the specific tasks outlined in ECOSOC Resolution E/2000/35 into concrete activities to be undertaken by the UNFF over the next five years. The overall goal of the MYPOW is to facilitate and promote implementation at national, regional and global levels of sustainable forest management in all types of forests. The MYPOW must also allow the UNFF to provide a forum for policy guidance and coordination.

6. To ensure effectiveness, UNFF should have a manageable agenda. For instance, each session of the UNFF could deal with one crosscutting issue and two other priority issues. These could include issues that arise from national reports dealing with obstacles and achievements in implementation as well as current developments in other processes, in particular forest-related conventions and global programmes. The Council invites the UNFF to undertake frequent consultations with these other fora e.g. the U N Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

7. To facilitate the UNFF session discussions and support the MYPOW through the collection of background information and preparatory discussions the Council supports the establishment of ad hoc working groups on:

- finance

- parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework

- a reporting system including monitoring and assessment

Intersessional meetings will also be important in facilitating and advancing UNFF's work.

8. The Council stresses the importance it places on the appropriate participation of all relevant organisations, instruments, institutions, regional processes as well as the private sector, NGOs and other major groups as defined in Agenda 21 in the work of the UNFF.

9. The Council considers that the Plan of Action should be seen as a process to support implementation of IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, which are to be carried out at the national, regional and global levels. It is urgent to define the Plan. The Plan of Action should build on the IFF Final Report, which outlines how implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action should be undertaken. Since the UNFF is a facilitating rather than an operational body, its Plan of Action will have to work through existing instruments by giving guidance for more effective and coherent support for the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. A decision should be taken at UNFF1 on the overall framework, targets and timetable, which will facilitate actors in identifying their own priorities and approaches to implement the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action in a holistic manner. This should lead countries, CPF member bodies, and regional processes such as the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and other stakeholders to provide appropriate inputs.

10. The Council welcomes the recent establishment of the CPF. It should support the work of the UNFF and enhance cooperation and coordination amongst its participants, to seek synergies between the organisations and the instruments involved. CPF participants should undertake joint programming that is consistent with policies, strategies and activities promoted by the UNFF. The CPF should act in a twofold manner; to coordinate inputs from its various members to UNFF, and to take full account of UNFF activities in its work. The Council is looking forward to seeing concrete proposals on specific inputs and aspects from CPF. The Council recognises that effective coordination is only possible if states that are members of the governing bodies of CPF organisations adopt coherent positions with respect to the individual agencies.

11. Reaffirming its April 2000 Conclusions, the Council attaches great importance to ECOSOC's decision that within five years the UNFF will consider with a view to recommending to the ECOSOC and through it to the General Assembly the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.

12. The Council considers that the main measure of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests will be its ability to fulfil the goals, objectives and principal functions set out in the ECOSOC Resolution and thereby promote greater implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. The Council attaches great importance to the review of the effectiveness of the arrangement in five years time. The review should be based on targets set for the functions and the objectives of the international arrangement of forests from the start.

13. The EU urges all partners to show a sustained commitment to the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action. The EU Member States are already committed to developing national forest programmes (nfps) to strengthen sustainable forest management in Europe. As the group of donors providing the largest volume of grant funds for forests the EU is ready to take a leading role, internationally, in the implementation process.

14. One of the main challenges to achieving sustainable forest management is to make it self-financing in the long run. Public, private, domestic and international sources have complementary roles to play in achieving this goal. Sustainable forest management is important in meeting human needs and alleviating poverty. In this context, there is a continuing need for Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows – especially to the poorest countries – in support of nfps, including national fin egies, and for capacity building. The EU remains fully committed to development cooperation, including to reaching the ODA target of 0,7 % of GNP by all donor countries as soon as possible. Innovative work is also required on financial instruments, which will capture the full value of services provided by forests.

15. Further improvement in coordination of ODA so as to ensure an integrated approach towards sustainable development in general and sfm in particular, also continues to be a priority for the EU. At the global level, the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the series of UN Conferences and Summits of the 1990's, in line with the Millennium Declaration adopted by the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations in September 2000 is of particular importance. The international development targets as elaborated in those Conferences and agreed within the OECD high-level meeting of DAC in 1996, provide a useful framework to this end. The Council welcomes the work done on a draft Code of Conduct for Forest Sector Development Cooperation of the European Community and the EU Member States. The Council also welcomes the proposed collaborative action in support of national forest programmes through the NFP Implementation

Facility and UNDP Programme on Forests (PROFOR). The EU has a key role to play in making both initiatives successful.

16. Recalling the Council Resolution on Forests and Development of November 1999, the EU will continue to assist developing countries to develop and implement national forest programmes in so far as the countries concerned request such assistance in their bilateral negotiations with donors within existing development programmes.

17. Strengthened political commitment is of utmost importance for successful sustainable forest management. The Council welcomes the opportunity provided for ministers at the high-level segments of the UNFF to discuss and take decisions on sustainable forest management. The EU is of the view that high-level ministerial meetings should be organised twice over the five years of the UNFF, the last one taking place at UNFF5.

18. A declaration by the high-level segment on achievements made and further action to be taken towards sustainable forest management would also constitute a valuable message to World Summit on Sustainable Development."

Wines

The Council adopted a Regulation authorising the offer and delivery for direct human consumption of certain imported wines which may have undergone oenological processes not provided for in Regulation (EC) No 1793/99.

The aim of this Regulation is to maintain the status quo regarding derogations for US oenological practices (not approved in the EU) up to, but no later than, 31 December 2003, with a view to ensuring the smooth continuation of current negotiations between the Community and the USA towards an agreement on trade in wine.

Cotton

Following the political agreement already reached at its April session, today the Council adopted both the Regulation adjusting the system of aid for cotton following the accession of Greece and the Regulation on production aid for cotton, on the basis of an increase by 2% in the reduction of 50% of the guide price for each 20 000 tonnes that exceed 1 500 000 tonnes of BC production.

Arable crops *

At the last Council session in April, a political agreement was reached on the proposal amending Regulation (EC) No 1251/99 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops. Today, the Council formally adopted this Regulation which establishes a derogation from set-aside for fodder legumes crops on organic holdings. The Regulation will, therefore, allow organic beef farmers to cultivate and use fodder legumes such as clover on set-aside land.

TRADE ISSUES

Prohibition imports of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*)

The Council approved a Regulation prohibiting imports of bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*) originating in Belize, Cambodia, Equatorial Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Honduras.

This Regulation implements the recommendations adopted in November 2000 by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT).

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Association with Bulgaria - implementing rules for State aid

The Council adopted a Decision determining the position to be taken by the Community within the EU-Bulgaria Association Council for the adoption of the necessary rules for the implementation of the provisions on State aid in the Europe Agreement with Bulgaria.

Association with Poland - implementing rules for State aid

The Council adopted a Decision determining the position to be taken by the Community within the EU-Poland Association Council for the adoption of the necessary rules for the implementation of the provisions on State aid in the Europe Agreement with Poland.

Participation of the Slovak Republic and Poland in the Community programmes Socrates and Youth

The Council adopted the position to be taken by the Community within the Association Council on the financial contribution of the Slovak Republic and Poland for participation in the Socrates and Youth programmes in the years 2001 to 2006.

During 2000, the Association Councils with the various candidate countries adopted decisions enabling those countries to participate in the second phase of the Socrates programme and in the Youth programme. The decisions established the financial contribution of the countries in question for 2000 only, and provided that the contribution for the remaining years (2001-2006) would be detailed in subsequent decisions.

FISHERIES

Regulation on a catch documentation scheme for *Dissostichus spp.*

The Council adopted the regulation establishing a catch documentation scheme for *Dissostichus spp.*

This Regulation lays down the general rules and conditions governing the implementation by the Community of the catch documentation scheme which has been adopted by the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). It is intended to improve monitoring of international trade in this species and to identify the origins of all *Dissostichus spp.*, imported from or exported to the territories of the CCAMLR Contracting Parties.

RESEARCH

S/T Agreement with Malta

- The Council adopted the Decision on the signature and provisional application of the Additional
- Protocol to the Agreement establishing an association between the European Economic Community
- and the Republic of Malta, to associate the Republic of Malta to the Fifth Framework
- Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration (1998-2002)

INTERINSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

Ombudsman

The Council approved a draft Decision concerning an amendment to the regulations and general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties following amendment of the Financial Regulation.

This draft Decision follows on from the Council's Decision, taken on 13 December 1999, to amend the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977 applicable to the general budget of the European Communities.

TRANSPARENCY

Public access to Council documents

The Council approved the reply to the confirmatory application made by Mr Ben HAYES, the Danish delegation voting against.