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Agriculture and Fisheries

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President **Fernand Etgen**
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OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
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ITEMS DEBATED

AGRICULTURE

Market developments

The Council was briefed by the Commission on a package of measures to address the difficult situation of several agricultural sectors. An exchange of views between ministers followed ([11588/15](#)).

In response to the difficulties currently being faced by these sectors the Commission put forward a package of measures worth EUR 500 millions. These measures are intended to help address difficulties in cash-flow faced by farmers, stabilise markets and address the functioning of the supply chain.

During the debate ministers expressed strong concerns about recent developments in a range of agricultural sectors, in particular the dairy and pigmeat sectors and the need to respond rapidly and efficiently to the difficulties farmers are currently facing.

While supporting the package presented by the Commission, delegations underlined the need to be more precise about the content of the package. The provision of direct targeted aid scheduled by the Commission, in particular the allocation between member states and the affected sectors, is a key point for many delegations. As regards the facility to advance part of the direct payments and rural development payments, most ministers emphasized that flexibility in the controls was needed to help facilitate implementation. In general they considered that, over the medium term, the strengthening of promotion measures and the planned work on the supply chain were important issues.

Among the measures proposed by the Commission, the Council noted in particular:

- the facility for member states to advance on 16 October up to 70% of direct payment including other elements of this payment scheme (in particular to young farmers) and 85% of the rural development payments;
- a new private storage scheme for milk products such as skimmed milk powder and cheese;
- the reopening of private storage for pigmeat;
- an additional funding for promotion of dairy products and pigmeat in the EU and third countries and a further intensification of efforts to tackle non tariff barriers in third countries;
- the strengthening of the Milk Market Observatory ;
- the establishment of High Level Group to improve the functioning of the supply chain to the benefit of farmers;

- a better use of the "milk package";
- a rapid political agreement on the proposal on the school scheme for fruit and vegetable and milk;
- the use of some products such as the milk powder to address the nutritional needs of the refugees;
- a complete implementation of financing opportunities proposed by the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

Other measures or initiatives were mentioned by member states, some of those depending from the member states or the producers themselves, in particular:

- the Council took note of the interest from certain member states, even if it is not unanimous, for a temporary increase of the intervention price for skimmed milk powder;
- the achievement of the negotiations with Russia on sanitary barriers as regards pigmeat non covered by the ban;
- targeted measures for the countries the most affected by the Russian ban;
- a call for flexibility in the implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) during this transitional year;
- the Council took also note of the wish expressed by some delegations for relaxing of state aid rules;
- the establishment of a High level group on the future of the dairy sector;
- an implementation of the simplification programme giving the priority to the reduction of the costs of farmers;
- a strengthened cooperation in the producer organisations and the use of their operational programmes for developing structural measures;
- a careful consideration on the tools allowing to respond to price volatility.

The Presidency indicated that technical aspects of the Commission package will be examined by the Council preparatory bodies in the coming days. The ministers will come back on the issue on the occasion of the informal agriculture meeting in Luxembourg on 15 September.

Any other business

– *African swine fever*

The Council took note of the Estonian delegation request, supported by Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, in relation to African swine fever (ASF) and of the reaction of the Commission representative ([11555/15](#)).

ASF is a highly contagious viral disease affecting wild boar and domestic pigs. ASF was first detected in Lithuania and then in Poland at the beginning of 2014. Since then, cases in wild boars and domestic pigs have also been identified in Estonia and Latvia. Some member states supported the views of the countries affected to increase support and to review - in the light of the latest scientific data - the strategy to fight the disease.

– *Drought in Eastern Europe*

The Polish and the Romanian delegations briefed the ministers of the consequences of the severe drought affecting their countries this summer ([11593/15](#)).

Some member states supported their request for a specific support programme for the crops and the animal production affected by the drought.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED
