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## **PRESS RELEASE**

3307th Council meeting

### **Agriculture and Fisheries**

Brussels, 24 March 2014

President

**Athanasios TSAFTARIS**

Minister for Rural Development and Food of Greece

# **P R E S S**

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## **Main results of the Council**

### ***Promotion for agricultural products***

*Ministers held a new policy debate on the proposal for promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries and agreed on the compromise proposal put forward by the Presidency. Minister Tsafaris concluded that " We now have a mandate to negotiate with the European Parliament. We hope soon to be able to adopt a proposal in first reading before the end of the term of office of the current Parliament."*

### ***Organic farming***

*Ministers were briefed by the Commission about its proposal for a review of the legal framework for organic production and farming in Europe. The proposal acknowledges that the current EU policy on organic production has drawbacks such as complex legislation and unclear provisions, or deficiencies in the control system.*

### ***Origin labelling of meat***

*The Council discussed a report from the Commission on the feasibility of introducing mandatory indication of the origin of meat used as an ingredient. The report presents various scenarios, but the President of the Council noted that the "positions of member states on this issue are still diverging at this stage."*

### ***Sandeel management***

*With regard to fisheries issues, the Council reached agreement on establishing a total allowable catch (TAC) for sandeel for 2014. A TAC on blue whiting has been included in the proposal.*

### ***Coastal States consultations on mackerel***

*Member states also broadly welcomed the five-year arrangement for mackerel in the North-East Atlantic reached between the EU, Norway and the Faeroe Islands. They regretted however that Iceland is not part of the agreement.*

### ***Other items approved***

*During this session, the Council also adopted trade measures against three third countries in response to illegal fishing activities, strengthened rules for the exchange of information on savings income, the roadworthiness package and rules for the introduction of noise-related operating restrictions at EU airports.*

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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>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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Ms Mar a DAMAN KI

M. Tonio BORG

Member

Member

Member

## **ITEMS DEBATED**

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Information and promotion measures for agricultural products**

The Council held a policy debate on the proposal for a regulation on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries ([16591/13](#)).

Member states supported the compromise put forward by the Presidency ([7831/14](#)). The financing of the measures was one of the last outstanding issues. Delegations indicated that they were in favour of increasing, on a permanent basis, the EU financing rate, rather than maintaining the possibility of national co-financing. They considered that this would give SMEs and producer organisations the financial capability to engage in such actions.

Another outstanding issue was the involvement of the member states in the promotion programmes. In this regard, delegations agreed with the Presidency that member states could play an active role in assisting the proposing organisations in the preparation of their proposals at a national level; however, once submitted to the Commission, those proposals would have to be assessed at EU level, in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012<sup>1</sup> and its implementing rules.

The proposal had already been discussed at the last Agriculture Council meeting in February, on the basis of a Presidency questionnaire.

On the basis of this agreement, the Special Committee on Agriculture examined the amendments proposed by the European Parliament and gave the presidency a mandate to negotiate with the Parliament, with the aim of adopting the final proposal before the end of the Parliament's term.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1



## **New proposal on organic farming**

The Commission presented to the ministers a proposal for a regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. In December last year, the Council was briefed on the main results of the public consultation on organic farming conducted by the Commission ([17375/13](#)).

The Commission proposes a review of the legal and political aspects of organic production and farming in Europe. The proposal acknowledges that the current EU policy on organic production has drawbacks (complex legislation and unclear provisions, deficiencies in the control system and in the trade regime, significant administrative burden, lack of opportunities for EU producers, etc.). Both the current legislation on organic farming and the European organic action plan should be modernised.

The main elements of the Commission's new proposal are the following:

- Production rules are harmonised by removing exceptions, except in very specific circumstances;
- The agricultural ingredients used in the composition of organic processed products have to be exclusively organic;
- Organic operators other than farmers or operators producing seaweed or aquaculture animals (except micro-enterprises) are required to develop a system for improving their environmental performance;
- The control system is integrated into a single legislative text (Commission's proposal for a regulation on official controls);
- A system of group certification is introduced for small-scale farmers in the EU;
- Specific provisions are introduced for purposes of enhanced traceability and fraud prevention;
- The trade regime is adapted. The possibility of equivalence agreements with third countries remains while the system of unilateral equivalence is phased out;

The Presidency will start examination of the legislative proposal in the coming weeks.

## **Report on the fruit and vegetables sector since the 2007 reform**

The Council took note of a recent report from the Commission on the implementation of the provisions concerning producer organisations, operational funds and operational programmes in the fruit and vegetables sector since the 2007 reform ([7312/14](#)).

This reform aimed to strengthen the role of fruit and vegetable producer organisations (POs) by providing a wider range of tools to enable them to prevent and manage market crises. Incentives were created to encourage mergers between POs, associations of POs (APOs) and transnational cooperation.

The report points out that there is persistently little or no organisation in the fruit and vegetables sector, particularly in some southern member states and some member states that joined the EU in 2004 and later. According to the Commission this rules out benefits of specific aid foreseen for the sector; it also weakens the bargaining power of the producers within the supply chain. Further more according to the Commission the very sparse use of crisis prevention and management instruments by the POs shows that they need to be improved.

Commissioner Ciolos further indicated that in the light of discussions on the report in the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission would continue to reflect on how best to adjust the existing legal framework in order to improve conditions in the fruit and vegetables sector while ensuring budgetary neutrality.

## **Report on the indication of the origin of meat**

The Commission presented to the ministers a report on the feasibility of extending mandatory origin labelling for all meat used as an ingredient. The report was published in December last year ([18148/13](#)).

There are still diverging views among the member states as regards the scenarios assessed by the report. While many delegations were in favour of introducing mandatory labelling, a number of them would like the labelling to indicate the specific EU member state or the specific third country whereas some others would prefer it to indicate EU/non-EU origin. However some others argued for maintaining origin labelling on a voluntary basis (i.e. status quo).

The report weighs up the need for the consumer to be informed and the feasibility of introducing mandatory origin labelling, and provides a cost-benefit analysis including the impact on the single market and on international trade. This report is of particular importance in the light of the fraudulent mislabelling of beef products in the EU revealed at the beginning of last year.

The main findings in the report reveal that:

- Consumers are interested in the indication of the origin of meat, but are not prepared to pay the price such labelling involves. The report points out that the more precise the information, the higher the costs will be.
- If obliged to indicate the origin of meat, food business operators may become more selective concerning their suppliers, reduce the number of intermediaries and avoid the use of trimmings and fat. However, the credibility of the system would require increased monitoring by the public authorities to prevent fraud.

In its report, the Commission indicates that further steps, which may include tabling a legislative proposal to regulate the indication of origin of meat used as an ingredient in foods should be considered on the basis of the discussion in the Council and the European Parliament.

At the end of the Council's debate, the Commission concluded that any decision require further examination of this issue.

## **FISHERIES**

### **Management of sandeel - establishment of a TAC for 2014**

The Council reached an agreement on the establishment of a total allowable catch (TAC) for sandeel for 2014 in line with the scientific advice. In addition, following the conclusion of the EU-Norway bilateral agreement and the arrangement between Coastal States (see point below), a higher TAC of blue whiting is also included in the same agreement ([7916/14](#)).

This issue of sandeel is of particular importance for Denmark, which is the main stakeholder in the sandeel fisheries. Owing to the short-lived nature of this species, the fishing season for sandeel opens on 1 April. The scientific advice for this stock generally becomes available just before the beginning of the fishing season. This year the scientific advice for 2014 was published on 28 February, leaving very little time to prepare and adopt a specific decision.

In December 2012, the Council invited the Commission to submit separate TAC proposals for each stock of short-lived species, including sandeel.

## **Coastal States consultations on mackerel**

The Commission reported back to Council on the five-year arrangement for mackerel in the North-East Atlantic, which was reached in London on 12 March 2014 between the EU, the Faroe Islands and Norway.

Member states broadly welcomed the arrangement, which put an end to a period of four years without common Coastal State management of this mackerel stock. They also regretted that Iceland was not part of the arrangement.

The arrangement, establishes a number of important principles, including a commitment to sustainable fisheries, sharing between the parties, and a commitment to establish a new long-term management plan in 2014 following the advice of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice. Iceland is not part yet of this arrangement but the provisions of the arrangement make room for another Coastal State to join at a later stage.

Following the conclusion of this arrangement, an agreement was reached between the EU and the Faroe Islands on reciprocal exchanges of fishing opportunities in each other's waters for 2014. The new agreement involves the exchange of a number of important quotas, including cod, haddock, saithe and redfish for the EU, with Norway pout and blue whiting for the Faroe Islands. The parties have also agreed reciprocal access to each other's waters for mackerel and blue whiting.

In addition, EU-Norway bilateral consultations have established reciprocal exchanges of fishing opportunities in each other's waters for 2014.

## **Any other business**

### **– *European honey breakfast initiative***

The Slovenian delegation briefed the ministers about the possible extension at the EU level of a national initiative to promote honey for the breakfast of children at school ([7855/14](#)).

For seven years Slovenian beekeepers have organised an annual day of education and promotion entitled "Honey Breakfast" where nationally produced honey is offered to nursery and primary school children for breakfast. In November this year, this initiative will be presented at the 3rd International Beekeeping Conference organised in Slovenia to facilitate the extension of this initiative to other member states.

Several member states supported the Slovenian initiative pointing out the important role played by bees as pollinators in the environment and the nutritional added value of honey.

The Commission considered that a campaign of this kind promoting healthy eating habits amongst the youngest fits the current discussion on its proposal on the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables and milk in schools (5958/14).

– ***Global forum on family farming***

The Council was briefed by the Hungarian delegation about the outcome of the Global Forum on Family Farming which took place in Budapest from 4 to 6 March 2014 ([7890/14](#)).

In the context of the International Year of Family Farming for 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development organised a global forum to identify the various political, policy, business and social elements that play a role in the complex environment in which family farms operate.

– ***Dairy sector***

The German, Polish, Dutch, Austrian, Irish, Danish, Latvian, Estonian, Belgian and Luxembourg delegations informed the ministers about their request for a "soft landing" in the context of the phasing-out of the milk quotas ([7970/14](#)).

These delegations, supported by an additional Member State, asked whether it would be possible to reduce the penalties for those countries who risk exceeding their national milk quotas, by adjusting the fat correction coefficients and/or reducing the super levy. However, a number of delegations were opposed to this request considering that the rules defined in 2008 for the end of quota regime should be applied strictly to avoid a distortion of competition within the EU.

The Commission is due to present a report by 30 June 2014 on the development of the market situation in the milk sector, as provided for in the "milk package" regulation. This report will be discussed further in the Council.

– ***Rice market***

The Council took note of the Italian delegation's concerns about the difficult situation that the EU rice sector is facing due to the progressive increase into the EU of imports of milled rice ([7886/14](#)).

This issue was considered by the Agriculture Council in December last year. According to Italy, the situation has been made worse by a steady increase into the EU of imports of milled rice from least developed countries (LDCs), in particular Cambodia and Myanmar.

Italy's view was supported by other rice producing EU member states.

While taking note of these concerns, the Commission indicated it was closely monitoring the market situation and, if there proved to be a risk of market distortion, would be ready to act to avoid any major crisis. In this context the Commission had started bilateral discussions with one of the third countries concerned.

– ***Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing***

The Spanish delegation informed the ministers about its concerns regarding the side-effects of trade measures adopted by the Council against other countries (see the first decision of this kind under "Other items approved" below) in the context of the regulation on fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing ([7511/14](#)). These measures would directly affect the trade in fisheries products and other fisheries-related activities with those countries, while the IUU policy would not prevent fleets from third countries fishing in the waters of those countries and supplying the EU markets afterwards. The Spanish delegation also requested more transparency in the process of identifying non-cooperating countries and called on the Commission and Member States to use all tools available under the IUU policy in order to ensure a coherent approach across the Union.

Several member states agreed with Spain that it was necessary to draw the attention of the Council to this issue and to ask from the Commission to take the appropriate measures to obtain the maximum transparency, common collaboration and coherence in the application of IUU regulation. These countries noted in particular the distortion of competition between fishing fleets from member states and third countries due to the implementation of those trade measures.

The Commission welcomed the Member States' ambition in fighting IUU and referred to the complicated procedure that is to be observed in applying the IUU policy. An assessment of this policy would start this year.

## **OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

### **AGRICULTURE**

#### **Amendment regarding farm surveys for 2014-2018**

The Council adopted an amendment to regulation 1166/2008 on farm structure surveys and the survey on agricultural production methods, as regards the financial framework for the period 2014-2018 following a first reading agreement with the European Parliament ([PE-CONS 46/14](#)).

This initiative aims to secure financing for the 2016 farm structure survey (FSS) and related projects. Regulation 1166/2008 establishes the requirements and methods for FSSes. Since the surveys are spread out over two multi-annual financial framework periods, it was not possible to fix their entire financing at the same time. Moreover, the accession of Croatia to the EU must be taken into account. This amendment establishes the financial framework for the 2016 FSS, sets out the EU's maximum financial contribution to Croatia's survey costs, and replaces the committee that assists the Commission in exercising its implementing powers.

#### **Derogations for transport of liquid oils and fats by sea**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation granting derogation from certain provisions of annex II to regulation 852/2004<sup>1</sup> as regards the transport of liquid oils and fats by sea ([6648/14](#)).

Regulation 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs requires that bulk foodstuffs in liquid, granulate or powdered form be transported in receptacles and/or containers/tankers reserved for the transport of foodstuffs (chapter IV of annex II). However, that requirement is not practical when applied to the transport in seagoing vessels of liquid oils and fats for human consumption. In addition, the availability of seagoing vessels reserved for the transport of foodstuffs is insufficient to serve the continuing trade in such oils and fats.

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<sup>1</sup> [OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p.1](#)

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) assessed the criteria for acceptable previous cargoes for edible fats and oils and a list of substances taking into account those criteria. On that basis, the proposed regulation should repeal and replace the existing directive 96/3<sup>1</sup> which hitherto granted derogation as regards the transport of liquid oils and fats by sea.

This Commission regulation is subject to regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

### **Wild game - Specific requirements for handling and post-mortem inspection**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending annex III to regulation 853/2004<sup>2</sup>, and annex I to regulation 854/2004<sup>3</sup> as regards the specific requirements for handling large wild game and for the post-mortem inspection of wild game ([7193/14](#)).

Regulation 853/2004 provides, inter alia, requirements for the production and placing on the market of meat from wild game. Food business operators are to ensure that such meat is placed on the market only if it is produced in compliance with annex III to that regulation. Annex I to regulation 854/2004 sets out the specific requirements for official controls concerning wild game meat.

Trade in unskinned large wild game from a hunting site to an approved game-handling establishment situated in the territory of another member state is a common practice which accounts for a significant part of the wild game meat produced in the EU. The amendment supplements the provisions of regulation 853/2004 concerning this trade and transport with a certification of compliance with the EU provisions at the place of origin. The amendment to regulation 854/2004 provides that the official veterinarians check that the relevant certificate accompanies the consignment and take into account the information contained in that certificate.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

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<sup>1</sup> [OJ L 21, 27.1.1996, p. 42](#)

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 206.



## **Use of animal by-products as a fuel in combustion plants**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation amending regulation 142/2011 as regards the use of animal by-products and derived products as a fuel in combustion plants ([6995/14](#)).

Regulation 1069/2009 lays down public and animal health rules for animal by-products and derived products, in order to prevent and minimise risks to public and animal health arising from those products. Regulation 142/2011<sup>1</sup> lays down implementing rules for regulation 1069/2009, including rules on the use and disposal of manure.

Provisions concerning the use of poultry manure as fuel for combustion on farms should be updated to harmonise requirements addressing the control of risks for human and animal health and the environment.

This Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the regulation, unless the European Parliament objects.

## **FISHERIES**

### **Illegal fishing activities - Trade measures against three countries**

The Council today triggered a series of measures affecting the trade in fisheries products and other fisheries-related activities with Belize, Cambodia and Guinea in order to put a stop to commercial benefits stemming from illegal fishing activities. Ultimately, fisheries products caught by vessels from these countries will be banned from being imported into the EU ([6262/14](#)).

The adoption of the implementing decision establishing a list of non-cooperating third countries in fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing pursuant to regulation 1005/2008<sup>2</sup> is the first decision of this kind and follows a formal warning given in November 2012.

For further information, see [Press release](#).

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 54, 26.2.2011, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 286, 29.10.2008, p. 1.

## **ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **Taxation of savings interest**

The Council adopted a directive strengthening EU rules on the exchange of information on savings income, aimed at enabling the member states to better clamp down on tax fraud and tax evasion ([17162/13](#) + [17162/13 COR1](#) + [7977/14](#)).

Directive 2003/48/EC requires the member states to exchange information automatically so as to enable interest payments made in one member state to residents of other member states to be taxed in accordance with the laws of the state of tax residence.

The text enlarges the scope of directive 2003/48/EC, reflecting changes to savings products and developments in investor behaviour since it came into force in 2005. The scope now covers new types of savings income and products that generate interest or equivalent income. It includes life insurance contracts, as well as a broader coverage of investment funds. And tax authorities, using a "look-through" approach, will be required to take steps to identify who is benefiting from interest payments.

The European Council in December 2013 called for the amending directive to be adopted by March 2014, given its significance in combating tax fraud and tax evasion. The member states will have until 1 January 2016 to adopt the national legislation necessary to comply with the directive.

### **Financial reporting and auditing - EU programme for 2014-2020**

The Council approved the establishment of a programme to support the activities of bodies which contribute to the achievement of the EU policy objectives in relation to financial reporting and auditing for the period 2014 to 2020 ([PE-CONS 134/13](#)).

The objective of the programme is to improve the conditions for the efficient functioning of the internal market by supporting the transparent and independent development of international financial reporting and auditing standards.

The programme will cover activities for the development of standards, applying, assessing or monitoring standards or overseeing standard-setting processes that are carried out by the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Foundation and the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) in the field of financial reporting, or by the Public Interest Oversight Board (PIOB) in the field of auditing.

The programme, which has a budget of EUR 43 million for the seven years, will provide operating grants awarded on an annual basis.

### **Cyprus - Economic adjustment programme**

The Council adopted a decision updating the conditions set by decision 2013/463/EU for a macroeconomic adjustment programme carried out by Cyprus ([7163/14](#) + [5979/14](#)).

This follows a third review by the Commission and the IMF, in liaison with the European Central Bank, of progress by Cyprus on implementing the programme.

Cyprus has been receiving financial assistance from the European Stability Mechanism since April 2013.

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### **European Economic Area - Croatia**

The Council adopted a decision on the signing, on behalf of the EU and its member states, and provisional application of the agreement on the participation of the Republic of Croatia in the European Economic Area and of three related agreements ([6693/14](#)).

**JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS****C.SIS budget for 2012**

The member states concerned, meeting within the Council, approved the management report concerning the implementation of the C.SIS installation and operation budget for 2012.

The financial regulation for the installation and operation of the Schengen C.SIS<sup>1</sup> provides that France must submit, for each financial year, a document required for approval of the accounts for the preceding financial year.

**TRADE POLICY****Anti-dumping - Sweetcorn in kernels - Thailand**

The Council amended regulation 875/2013 imposing anti-dumping duties on imports of certain prepared or preserved sweetcorn in kernels originating in Thailand, following a review concerning River Kwai International Food Industry Co. Ltd ([7086/14](#)).

**TRANSPORT****Roadworthiness package\***

The Council adopted updated rules on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles ([PE-CONS 10/14](#); statement: [7577/14 ADD 1](#)), roadside inspections of commercial vehicles ([PE-CONS 12/14](#); statement: [7580/14 ADD 1](#)) and vehicle registration documents ([PE-CONS 11/14](#); statement: [7578/14 ADD 1](#)) (roadworthiness package).

Today's final adoption of the three directives by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament.

For details, see press release [7979/14](#).

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 179, 7.7.2007, as amended in 2008 (OJ L 113, 25.4.2008) and 2009 (OJ L 323, 10.12.2009).

**Aircraft noise\***

The Council adopted its position at first reading on a new regulation which harmonises and strengthens rules on how authorities take decisions to set operating restrictions at EU airports to limit nuisance from aircraft noise ([5560/14](#); statement of reasons: [5560/14 ADD 1](#); statement: [7583/14 ADD 1](#)). The rules are based on principles agreed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), known as the balanced approach to noise management.

The approval by the Council paves the way for final adoption, which requires endorsement by the European Parliament at second reading.

For details see press release [7981/14](#).

**Aviation safety rules - derogations**

The Council decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of a decision authorising the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom to derogate from certain common aviation safety rules pursuant to Article 14(6) of regulation 216/2008 ([6211/14](#) + [6211/14 ADD1](#)). The proposed derogations for the Slovak Republic relate to the validity and renewal of instrument ratings and of class and type ratings; those for the United Kingdom concern the revalidation of single engine piston and touring motor glider class ratings as well as synthetic flight examiners who conduct tests in aeroplane simulators.

The Council also decided not to oppose adoption by the Commission of another decision authorising the United Kingdom to derogate from certain common aviation safety rules pursuant to Article 14(6) of regulation 216/2008 ([6320/14](#) + [6320/14 ADD1](#)). The proposed derogation concerns the conversion of the existing national licences for sailplane pilots.

All member states will be entitled to apply these measures.

The Commission decisions are subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decisions, unless the European Parliament objects.

## **SPACE POLICY**

### **Copernicus programme for Earth observation**

The Council adopted a regulation establishing the *Copernicus* programme for Earth observation ([PE-CONS 144/13](#) and [7610/14 ADD 1](#)).

[Copernicus](#), previously known as GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security), aims at providing Europe with a continuous, independent and reliable access to earth observation data and information.

Copernicus, which is based on a partnership between the Union, the European Space Agency ([ESA](#)) and the member states, is structured in six different services: marine, atmosphere, land and climate change monitoring as well as support to emergency and security services.

Copernicus uses data from satellites and in-situ sensors such as buoys or air sensors to provide timely and reliable information and forecasting to support a wide range of areas, such as agriculture and fisheries, land use and urban planning, the fight against forest fires, disaster response, maritime transport or air pollution monitoring.

The programme is to be implemented within the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs. It is therefore designed to foster innovative and commercial applications that can improve the daily life of citizens and create economic opportunities for European companies and SMEs.

Together with the *Galileo* navigation satellite system, it will play a key role in ensuring independent access by Europe to space.

Copernicus will run from 2014 to 2020 with a budget of EUR 3.7 billion (in 2011 prices).

## **CULTURE**

### **European capitals of culture 2020-2033**

The Council adopted its position at first reading and the statement of the Council's reasons on a decision establishing a Union action for the European capitals of culture for the years 2020 to 2033 ([5793/14](#) + [5793/14 ADD1](#))

The current rules for selecting the European capitals of culture<sup>1</sup> will expire in 2019, therefore the Commission was invited to present a new proposal to continue the initiative beyond 2019 ([12558/12](#)).

The general aim of the action is to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens and to strengthen the feeling of European citizenship, simultaneously highlighting the richness of European cultures and both their diversity and their shared features.

## **FOOD LAW**

### **Methods of sampling and analysis for the control of dioxins and PCBs**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission regulation laying down methods of sampling and analysis for the control of levels of dioxins, dioxin-like PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyl) and non-dioxin-like PCBs in certain foodstuffs ([6758/14](#)).

The Commission regulation is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt it, unless the European Parliament objects.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision 1622/2006 ([OJ L 304, 3.11.2006](#))

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **EU ecolabel for textile products**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU ecolabel for textile products ([6462/14](#), [6462/14 ADD 1](#)).

The Commission decision is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decision, unless the European Parliament objects.

### **EU ecolabel for printed paper**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision amending decision 2012/481/EU establishing the ecological criteria for the award of the EU ecolabel for printed paper ([6504/14](#)).

The Commission decision is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decision, unless the European Parliament objects.

### **EU ecolabel - extension of the validity of the ecological criteria**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission decision amending decisions 2006/799/EC, 2007/64/EC, 2009/300/EC, 2009/894/EC, 2011/330/EU, 2011/331/EU and 2011/337/EU in order to prolong the validity of the ecological criteria for the award of the EU ecolabel to certain products ([6989/14](#)).

The Commission decision is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the decision, unless the European Parliament objects.



### **Quality of petrol and diesel fuels**

The Council decided not to oppose the adoption of a Commission directive amending annexes I and II to directive 98/70/EC relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels ([6456/14](#)).

The Commission directive is subject to the regulatory procedure with scrutiny. This means that now that the Council has given its consent, the Commission may adopt the directive, unless the European Parliament objects.

### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### **European Economic and Social Committee**

The Council appointed Mr Niels LINDBERG MADSEN (Denmark), as a member of the European Economic and Social Committee for the remainder of the current term of office, which runs until 20 September 2015 ([7561/14](#)).

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