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## **PRESS RELEASE**

3285th Council meeting

### **Agriculture and Fisheries**

Brussels, 16 and 17 December 2013

President            **Vigilijus JUKNA**  
Minister for Agriculture of Lithuania

# **P R E S S**

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## **Main results of the Council**

*Concerning fisheries, the ministers reached a political agreement on **2014 fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in EU and certain non-EU waters and on fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in the Black Sea**. For the general 2014 fishing opportunities, the levels of the stocks were agreed where possible on the basis of scientific advice and in line with the maximum sustainable yields (MSY). "We have reached a balanced compromise that allows for a number of stocks to reach maximum sustainable yield in 2015 ensuring the sustainable use of fishery resources and vitality of fisheries", noted the President of the Council Vigilius Jukna. As regards the Presidency compromise for the Black Sea, the main element endorsed by the Commission is a roll-over in the EU total allowable catches (TACs) in the Black Sea for turbot and sprat. Control, monitoring and data collection measures will be reinforced, and management approaches at the regional level developed.*

*As regards agriculture, the Commission presented to the Council its proposal for a regulation on **promotion measures for agricultural products**. Most member states welcomed the proposal and acknowledged the fact that the current context, in which the EU agriculture is faced with a much more competitive environment, calls for a renewed policy of promotion. However many countries pointed out the need for the member states to be better involved in the process.*

*Finally, the Council adopted the **common agricultural policy (CAP) reform package and transitional CAP measures for 2014** following a first-reading agreement with the European Parliament. The CAP reform package includes regulations on direct payments, common organisation of the markets, rural development and financing of the CAP. With this adoption, the Lithuanian Presidency finalises the process initiated in 2011 and sets out the new rules for the CAP in the next seven-year period, in order to equip the European agricultural sector for the opportunities and challenges of the future. "The Common Agricultural Policy will continue to be a vital Union policy, allowing us to maintain a sustainable, productive and competitive agricultural sector, and a thriving countryside across the Union" said the President of the Council.*

*The Council also adopted without discussion a number of items including:*

- the appointment of Danièle Nouy as head of the ECB supervisory board,*
- a decision clarifying provisions on the timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances and*
- the cohesion policy package for 2014-2020.*

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<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

– ***Rice market***

The Italian delegation, supported by Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, France and Portugal, underlined the difficult situation that the EU rice sector is facing in particular with the increase of EU imports of this product ([17559/13](#)).

Italy noted that in some EU regions, rice cultivation represents the most important agricultural activity of the area but, over the past few years, this sector has gradually been losing profitability and the rice cultivated surfaces are progressively reduced. This situation is made worse by the increase of EU imports of milled rice from least developed countries (LDCs) and from other countries with which the EU has bilateral agreements.

While taking note of the concerns of Italy and some member states, the Commission recalled that for some rice varieties, the EU is largely dependent from its imports. It noted also that in a first assessment no brutal imbalance has yet been observed in the rice market. However, the Commission said it was ready to initiate formal action on the basis of convergent data showing a risk of major crisis.

– ***"Traffic lights" nutrition labelling system***

The Italian delegation, supported by Croatia, expressed concerns about the possible impact of a recommendation of the British Department of Health for a "traffic lights" nutrition labelling system ([16575/13](#)).

Italy received support from many delegations worried about the potential consequences of this labelling system on the free movement of goods. This could mislead the consumer by providing wrong health information and could affect specifically the circulation of traditional regional food products wrongly stigmatised by this colour system.

The Commission recalled that the system developed by the United Kingdom is a voluntary system made possible by the legislation on labelling which develops also mandatory provisions. It proposes a front-of-pack nutrition labelling for food products. This system combines red, amber and green colour-coding and nutritional information to highlight information on energy and certain nutrients – fats, saturates, sugars and salt – which can have been shown to harm people's health if eaten in large quantities. However, the Commission is ready to prepare a report in due course on all the labelling systems put in place by the member states in the framework of the current legislation.