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to: Council

Subject: Work Programme of the Slovenian Presidency
– Agriculture and Fisheries

Delegations will find attached a slightly revised version of the Work Programme drawn up by the Slovenian Presidency concerning the Agriculture and Fisheries sector, to be presented to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 21 January 2008.

Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2008



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Work Programme for Agriculture and Fisheries



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA | REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRSTVO ZA KMETIJSTVO, | MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
GOZDARSTVO IN PREHRANO | FORESTRY AND FOOD

INTRODUCTION

Slovenia is the first of the Member States which joined the European Union (EU) in the last wave of its enlargement in 2004 and 2007 to hold the Council Presidency. At the same time Slovenia is closing the first Trio Presidency and its 18-month programme. The main aim of the Slovenian Presidency is to achieve the goals set out in this programme, to sustain the continuity of EU policies, and to ensure a smooth transition to the next Trio Presidency. Achieving these ambitious goals will require a continuous and sustained effort.

COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

From the establishment of the European Communities in the 1950s and during their development into an ever closer European Union the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has undergone many changes. The CAP has gradually developed into a policy which encourages a more market-orientated agricultural production, but also takes into account growing social demands for food safety, environmental protection and animal welfare. The CAP will be of great importance in the future, mainly in the sense of securing certain public goods, such as safe and high quality food, taking care of the environment and preserving the cultural landscape. Therefore it is necessary to have a broad debate about the multifunctional role of agriculture in Europe and to find consensus on future agricultural policy objectives. Above all, with this debate we have to make the European citizens aware of the decisive role which European farmers play in their everyday life and to ensure their support for the future CAP. Moreover, it will be necessary to respond to new challenges such as climate change, the increasing need for renewable energy sources and global population growth, all of which have important implications for European agriculture.

Further changes and adjustments of the CAP are indispensable. Hence, a high priority for the Slovenian Presidency will be the continuation of the 2003 reform process. In addition, the Slovenian Presidency will promote further simplification and better regulation of the CAP, in line with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy.

"Health Check" of the CAP

Four years after the 2003 CAP reform is an appropriate moment to check how the CAP is functioning. The **"Health Check"** should allow for a common diagnosis, based on which the EU can decide what policy adjustments are necessary in order to make the CAP more effective, efficient and simple. The Slovenian Presidency will conduct a thorough and constructive debate in the Council on the basis of the Commission Communication regarding the CAP "Health Check".

Three major questions will guide the discussions:

1. How to simplify the Single Payment Scheme?
2. How to adjust market management measures to grasp new opportunities?
3. How to face new challenges?

The Slovenian Presidency is determined to conclude the debate in the Council in good time for the Council's views to be taken into account when the Commission prepares its subsequent legislative proposals. As soon as these legislative proposals arrive, the Slovenian Presidency will lead the Council's first examination of them.

Concluding current CAP reforms

The Slovenian Presidency will work quickly to transform the Council's political agreement on the **reform of the wine sector** into a formal agreement, allowing adoption of the legislative texts as soon as possible.

The Slovenian Presidency will also guide the Council towards agreement on the revised **support scheme in the cotton sector**.

The situation in the milk sector requires the EU to take appropriate measures. The Slovenian Presidency will strive to adopt the proposal for increasing **national quotas for milk and milk products** for the next marketing year.

In addition, the Slovenian Presidency will aim to reach agreement in the Council on the proposal to roll over the current regime for **flax and hemp** and to include it in the Single Common Market Organization (CMO), and on the proposal to prolong the financing of the **Community Tobacco Fund**.

Simplification of the CAP

In accordance with efforts to simplify and streamline EU legislation, the Slovenian Presidency will endeavour to adopt the proposal aiming at simplifying cross-compliance rules as soon as possible. Likewise, the Slovenian Presidency will guide the Council towards adoption of the proposal to carry out the technical task of incorporating the rules on the reformed CMOs in the fruit and vegetable sector, the sugar sector and the dairy sectors; the same applies to incorporating the provisions on beef and veal labelling, and on Finnish seed aid, into the Single CMO Regulation. Together these measures represent a further significant contribution towards greater legislative transparency and certainty.

International affairs

At international level the Slovenian Presidency will maintain the EU's active role in international organizations, especially in the United Nations. Hence, the Slovenian Presidency will follow closely and actively the reform of the Food and Agriculture Organization as well as work in the Commission on Sustainable Development. In respect of the latter the Slovenian Presidency will continue to apply the Community guidelines for sustainable development.

FORESTRY

In the field of forestry the Slovenian Presidency will strive to promote Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), to improve competitiveness of forestry products, and to preserve forest biodiversity. Consequently, the Slovenian Presidency will encourage full implementation of the EU Forest Action Plan and the EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). In the process of coordinating the Member States' positions for the next session of the United Nations Forum on Forests the main focus will be on the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on all types of forests, which is especially important in the light of climate change, financial support for SFM and preservation of biodiversity.

The Slovenian Presidency will also pay attention to the latest developments concerning the proposed measures against illegal logging and associated trade. Special attention will be also given to harmonization among Member States in Green Public Procurement, where the use of SFM wood should be especially encouraged.

FOOD SAFETY, VETERINARY AND PHYTOSANITARY FIELD

The Slovenian Presidency will be committed to improving Community standards of food and feed safety and quality so as to maintain a high level of public and animal health, to provide for the protection of the environment, and to safeguard the interests of consumers by focusing on enhancing their trust.

The Slovenian Presidency is aware of the fact that consumers need to be provided with all the requisite information on the characteristics, composition, keeping and use of certain products.

Veterinary field

In veterinary public health the Slovenian Presidency will focus on the completion of procedures to adopt measures in stock-farming aimed at prohibiting the use of certain **substances having hormonal and thyrostatic action, and beta-agonists**. Another important issue during the Slovenian Presidency will be the continuation of work on adopting a proposed Regulation which will improve the current Community procedures for the establishment of maximum residue limits of **pharmacologically active substances in foodstuffs of animal origin** so as to avoid their introduction into the food chain and, consequently, to maintain a higher level of consumer health protection.

As regards **animal health**, the Slovenian Presidency will endeavour to enforce a simplified and more transparent system for publishing information in the veterinary and zoo-technical field. Moreover, the Slovenian Presidency will aim to simplify and improve health rules applicable to animal by-products. In addition, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to work on the Common Animal Health Strategy 2007–2013, which is to be used as a guide for political decision-making on how to maintain a high level of animal health in the EU. Furthermore, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to work towards adopting strategic goals in setting priorities for the control of diseases, financing of programmes and improving bio-safety in trade in animals and animal products. These objectives will serve as a basis for drawing up an Action Plan.

The Slovenian Presidency will also initiate discussion on modifying and improving legislation on **feed labelling** in order to resolve as many open issues as possible.

As regards international veterinary agreements, on 1 January 2007 Slovenia assumed the chair of the Council Working Party of Veterinary Experts – Potsdam Group, when dealing with certain bilateral veterinary agreements. As a consequence, Slovenia has been chairing the group in the field of bilateral veterinary agreements with Canada and the Faroe Islands. On 1 January 2008 Slovenia also assumed the chair of the group with regard to veterinary agreements and trade with Korea, India, countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China.

The Slovenian Presidency will also coordinate preparations for the regular annual General Assembly of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE – *Office International des Épizooties*).

Phytosanitary field

The Slovenian Presidency will continue to work on measures to reduce risks and impacts of plant protection products on human health and the environment. A key objective of the Slovenian Presidency in this area will be to achieve the greatest possible progress on two legislative proposals. The proposal for a Regulation on **placing plant protection products on the market** is the priority dossier on which the Slovenian Presidency will strive to make progress for achieving political agreement. The aim of the Slovenian Presidency for the proposed framework Directive on **sustainable use of pesticides** is to adopt a common position.

Besides discussions on the above-mentioned legislative proposals, the Slovenian Presidency will continue to conduct discussions on the proposal for a recast version of the Directive on the **marketing of fruit propagating material and fruit plants** intended for fruit production with a view to its adoption.

As far as international activities in the phytosanitary field are concerned, the Slovenian Presidency will in the context of the Commission for Phytosanitary Measures coordinate Member States' positions for implementation of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). The Slovenian Presidency will also coordinate Member States' positions for the spring meeting of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV).

The Slovenian Presidency will continue with the intensive work on preparing common positions for negotiations with the Russian Federation and other third countries. The aim is to ensure undisturbed trade in plant goods while taking into account Agreements on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

COMMON FISHERIES POLICY

Since fisheries resources are a part of our common heritage their effective protection and sustainable use need to be guaranteed through common efforts. In order to achieve this goal, the Slovenian Presidency will continue encouraging the conservation and sustainable management of fisheries resources. During the Slovenian Presidency, the Council will consider several proposals that concern measures for the conservation of resources, increased control, enforcement and inspection as well as the conclusion of fisheries partnership agreements with third countries.

It is widely recognised that the **illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing** represents one of the most serious threats worldwide to the sustainability of fish stocks and marine biodiversity. Therefore, the Slovenian Presidency will accord high priority to the legislative proposal by the Commission to combat IUU fishing. Accompanying this proposal, efforts to achieve sustainable use of resources will be promoted through the Commission Communication and the **proposal for a Council Regulation to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from destructive fishing practices**.

Another important goal will be the **simplification of technical measures** with the forthcoming amendment of the Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98 for the conservation of fishery resources through technical measures for the protection of juveniles of marine organisms.

In light of the current situation of fish stocks and continued excessive fishing, the Slovenian Presidency will endorse measures for the **recovery and conservation of certain fish stocks**. Special attention will be paid to the measures for the recovery and management of cod and herring stocks.

The Slovenian Presidency will continue with the well established frontloading exercise. We will attach particular importance to the policy statement on **fishing opportunities for 2009**, prepared by the Commission, which is an important element in the annual setting of the total allowable catch and allocation of quotas.

Priority will also be given to the process for the revision of the **Strategy for the Development of European Aquaculture**, which was adopted in 2002.

Within the framework of the **external fisheries policy** the Slovenian Presidency will promote an active role by the European Community in international and regional fisheries organisations and in fostering good fisheries relations with third countries through bilateral fisheries agreements.

Main events in Slovenia:

- **Informal Meeting of Agriculture Ministers** on 25–27 May 2008 in Brdo pri Kranju
- **Meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture** on 25–27 May 2008 in Maribor
- **Informal Meeting of the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers** on 13–16 May 2008 in Brdo pri Kranju
- **Conference of Directors of EU Paying Agencies** on 28–30 May 2008 in Brdo pri Kranju
- **Informal Meeting of the Working Party on Forestry and Meeting of Directors-General for Forests** on 17–20 June 2008 in Brdo pri Kranju
- **Informal Meeting of Directors-General for Fisheries and Conference on Aquaculture** on 28–30 June 2008 in Portorož