Programme of activities of the Belgian Presidency

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Ms Sabine LARUELLE and Mr Kris PEETERS gave a brief presentation on the **Belgian Presidency work programme in the agriculture and fisheries sectors** (doc. *11893/10*).

The agricultural policy priorities of the Belgian Presidency will focus mainly on the future of the common agricultural policy (CAP) after 2013 and on the dairy sector.

The **future of the CAP** will be the main point on the agenda for the informal meeting of the agriculture ministers to be held in la Hulpe on 21 September 2010 and will be discussed further at the December Council meeting. This will follow the conference on the results of the public consultation on this matter organised by the Commission on 19 and 20 July.

1) As regards the **dairy sector**, the presidency reminded the ministers that the work of the high level group (HLG) on milk will constitute the basis for an initial discussion at this Council meeting. The discussion on this issue will be taken further during the next Council meeting on 27 September with the aim of reaching a consensus on specific policy points; at the December Council meeting, the Commission will present a package of legislative proposals on this issue.

The Belgian presidency also intends to open a debate on a review of Europe's agricultural product quality policy using a legislative initiative from the Commission on this issue at the end of 2010.

In the **veterinary, plant health and food safety sectors** the emphasis will be on the roadmap on transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE), financing animal health strategy and the framework for genetically modified organisms (GMO). The presidency stressed the importance of the agricultural aspect of the GMO dossier.

2) The priorities for **fisheries policy** will focus on the reform of the **common fisheries policy (CFP)** for which legislative proposals will be tabled for the first half of 2011. On this issue, a conference will be organised by the Commission on 16 November 2010 and the Belgian presidency intends to highlight improved cooperation between science and fisheries by setting up an international symposium on " *Improved Science and Fisheries Partnership Agreements as Policy Drivers*" on 9 and 10 November 2010. The symposium's findings will be put to ministers at the November Fisheries Council lunch.

Concerning **2011 fishing opportunities**, the total allowable catches (TACs) and quotas for 2011 will take up an important part of the autumn meetings. In addition, the technical measures, which formed part of the annual TAC and quota regulation prior to the Treaty of Lisbon, have been moved to a transitional Regulation valid until 30 June 2011. As it has been decided to revise the technical measures as part of the CFP reform, the intention is to make as few substantive changes as possible and to cooperate with the European Parliament in the framework of the co-decision procedure so that this dossier is well advanced by the time it is handed over to the next Presidency.

The Belgian presidency will also continue the ongoing work on **multiannual management plans**.

Lastly, with regard to **external policy**, several regional fisheries organisations, including the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), will hold their annual meetings during the Belgian presidency. A new negotiating mandate is needed for the part of the ICCAT meeting dealing with bluefin tuna. This will be discussed at the October Council meeting.