

BRUSSELS UPDATE 15/12/2014

- [Commission warns four countries in fight against illegal fishing](#). As part of the continued fight against illegal fishing worldwide, the European Commission has today warned **the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** that they risk being identified as non-cooperating countries.

The four countries are issued with a 'yellow card' warning and now have a reasonable time to respond and take measures to rectify the situation. To help them achieve that, the Commission has also proposed a set of measures for each country to address their shortcomings.

The decision does not, at this stage, entail any measures affecting trade. However, should the situation not improve within six months, the EU could take further steps which could entail, among others, trade sanctions on fisheries imports.

The decision is a result of a thorough analysis of the situation on the ground and also takes into account each country's level of development. A formal dialogue with these countries to resolve the identified issues and implement the necessary measures will now take place.

- [AGRIFISH Council – 15/16 December](#): Today Karmenu Vella, the EU's Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, will present the Commission's proposals for fixing fishing opportunities for 2015 for the Atlantic, North Sea and Black Sea to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council.

In addition to this it is expected that **Belize** will be delisted due the sufficient progress made by this country regarding the implementation of measures to combat IUU.

- [Official controls Regulation State of play](#). The General Secretariat of the Council has published on 5th December a progress report on the discussions held at the Council on the official controls regulation. This report says that further work is still needed:

A) Provisions concerning the **financing of the official controls and other official activities** (Articles 76 to 84); the proposal considers an extension of mandatory fees to operators throughout the food chain as they benefit directly from performed official controls. However, microenterprises would be exempt from paying those fees. Furthermore, the proposal stipulates that fees would be either established at a flat rate on the basis of overall costs or calculated on the basis of actual costs of individual official controls. Although all delegations acknowledged that adequate financial resources should be made available for official controls, they could agree neither on the extent of financing to be covered by mandatory fees nor on the sectors and activities to be charged. Full subsidiarity was not an option either, even though many delegations were of the opinion that adequate flexibility and subsidiarity should be provided. However, some compromise proposals by the Italian Presidency have been supported by the majority of the delegations, judging them as steps in the right direction, specifically:

- The provision of harmonized import tariffs with the possibility of increasing the amount on the basis of actual costs;

- The possibility for Member States to provide for exemptions and lower rates for certain activities and groups of food business operators, subject to the rules on state aid.
- Flexible forms for calculation of charges;
- An appropriate level of transparency

B) Specific provisions concerning **the role of the official veterinarian** in the performance of official controls on live animals and products of animal origin in the Union and at Union borders (Articles 15, 47 and 53). The proposal establishes that certain tasks involved in carrying out official controls can be performed by the official veterinarian, under his supervision or under his responsibility, or even by other qualified and trained staff designated by the competent authorities. Many delegations objected to this increased flexibility, arguing that the official veterinarian should remain the key actor for official controls on live animals and products of animal origin. These delegations could, however, accept the possibility of establishing criteria and conditions to derogate from this principle in a delegated act. A few delegations insisted on keeping some flexibility and suggested focussing instead on harmonised training requirements for the staff performing the tasks in question. The Italian Presidency proposed the definitions of “Supervision” and “Under the responsibility of the official veterinarian” and identified the basic rules to define what activities are to be carried out necessarily by the official veterinarian, or may be performed by other staff of the competent authority under its supervision or responsibility. The EC will define criteria and uniform levels for the training of personnel involved in Official Controls. With regard to import controls on animals and animal products, most delegations welcomed the Italian Presidency's proposal which provides that Member States may decide whether they are carried out by the vet Official or by properly and uniformly trained personnel under the supervision of the official veterinarian.

C) **Specific rules for official controls and action taken by the competent authorities in the different sectors covered by the scope of the proposal** (Articles 15 to 24): under the proposal, the specific rules on official controls and action taken by the competent authorities for the specific sectors covered were to be adopted through delegated acts. To address concerns raised by most delegations about this, the Presidency proposed that most of the current specific rules be inserted in the basic act, thus limiting the number of empowerments. That proposal was welcomed. Consequently, suggestions for rewording specific articles were put forward and discussed but further work will be required

- **Maximum levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in traditionally smoked meat and meat products and traditionally smoked fish and fishery products** Recent evidences have demonstrated that, despite the application of good smoking practices to the extent possible, the lower levels for PAHs are not achievable in several Member States in certain cases of traditionally smoked meat and meat products and traditionally smoked fish and fishery products, as in those cases the smoking practices cannot be changed without changing significantly the organoleptic characteristics of the food. Consequently such traditionally smoked products would disappear from the market resulting in the closure of many small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). Therefore it is appropriate to provide a derogation from the application of the lower maximum levels for PAHs as of 1 September 2014 for certain Member States for 3 years for local production and consumption of traditionally smoked meat and meat products

and/or fish and fishery products. The current applicable maximum levels should continue to apply to those smoked products. This derogation should cover generally all meat and meat products and/or fish and fishery products without giving specific names of foodstuffs.

Agendas:

[European Parliament Plenary Session](#) 15-18 December 2014

IMPORTANT!: Analytical method as regard the determination of drained net weight for certain glazed fishery products - [Standing committee on plants, animals, food and feed - Section Biological Safety of the Food Chain](#). 16/12 2014

Links:

DG MARE:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/mare/news.cfm?subweb=342&sub=1&lang=en

EU Presidency: <http://italia2014.eu/en/>

EFSA: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>

Events:

<http://europa.eu/newsroom/calendar/?siteLanguage=en>

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