

Brussels Weekly update - 13/01/2017

Over the next few months, we'll be reporting back how Brexit is playing out across the water. Deeper insights will be shared on our website and through our Seafish Round-Up' industry newsletter - contact Nick.Connelly@seafish.co.uk to subscribe.

EU INSTITUTIONS

EP questions on Brexit: European Parliament Members of the EP (MEP) can submit questions for written answer to the European Commission (among other EU Institutions). The content of questions is the sole responsibility of their author(s), and a MEP can submit a maximum of five questions per month.

- [Brexit and the European internal market](#) - Auke Zijlstra (ENF)
- [Potential impact of Brexit](#) - Mike Hookem (EFDD)
- [EU presidency warns of risk to any Brexit deal from European Parliament](#) – Source Reuters

Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat warned on that the European Parliament could ruin any Brexit deal and must be involved in talks: "I do see it as a real concern that a parliament on the eve of a European Parliament election might be in a mood to scuttle the whole deal as good as that deal might be. So I would look forward to the European Parliament to be on board and kept privy to some of the negotiations."

EU COUNTRIES

- [Brexit: Irish High Court action to clarify article 50](#) – Source Irish Times

A group of British and Irish lawyers are taking legal action to seek a ruling from the European Court of Justice on whether Britain can unilaterally revoke Article 50 without the consent the other 27 EU states. Next week London's High Court is due to hear a challenge on whether leaving the EU means Britain automatically leaves the European Economic Area (EEA).

- [Visegrad Four in Brexit negotiations](#) – Source Jacques Delors Institute

According to this paper the Visegrad countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic) preferred framework for future UK-EU relations could entail granting the UK generous access to the single market in return for concessions on labour mobility. Moreover, in return for single market access the UK would have to contribute to the EU budget in an amount similar or close to the status quo. The deal could be sweetened for Britain by putting in place consultative and/or decision-making bodies involving the UK in the legislative process regarding (parts of) single market dossiers. However, there are limits to the unity of the Visegrad group making difficult for the group to act as a consistent coalition in Brexit negotiations.

.MORE INFORMATION

- [Tim Barrow, invisible ambassador](#) – Source POLITICO

This article describes the Britain's new envoy to the European Union, Tim Barrow as a solid diplomatic. Since his appointment as head of the Britain's Embassy in Russia in August 2011, Barrow operated almost entirely behind the scenes.

- [UK diplomats flee 'sinking ship' in Brussels](#) – Source POLITICO

POLITICO has reported that at least 24 EU-related jobs since the referendum, including nine posts at its Brussels representation, also known as UKREP. The number of British Commission staff has fallen by around 50 percent since 2005 and is barely one-third the numbers of French staff.

- [1st Report on the process for exiting the EU and the UK government negotiation objectives to be published on 14 January](#) – UK Parliament

Exiting the EU Committee has informed that its first report on the process for exiting the EU and the UK government negotiation objectives for its withdrawal from the EU will be published on 14th January. On 18th January an Oral Evidence Session will be held in the same Committee.

- [UK University launches center to study Brexit impact](#) – Source POLITICO

Birmingham City University has announced it will launch a Centre for Brexit Studies (CBS) to “further enhance understanding of the consequences” of the U.K.’s withdrawal from the European Union. There will be a first conference free to the general public which will “explore Brexit’s challenges for business and society” with a focus on trade, business, employment, and education among others.

FISHERIES

- **Update on IUU fishing – Source DG MARE**

On the occasion of an event organized by EJF, Oceana, Pew Charitable Trusts and WWF a representative from DG MARE, Pawel Swiderek gave an update on the current situation of countries which have been flagged with “cards” due the lack of cooperation in the fight against IUU fishing. Cambodia is the only country with a red card (listed in 2014) and the EC looks forward to reopening dialogue in the future. On the other hand, on the pre-identified countries Mr. Swiderek highlighted the progress made by Comoros and the problems detected in St Vincent. This country does not show signs of real willingness. IUU fishing is known to be intensive in West Africa and the EU has a developed strategy in that area focusing its work on coastal States and on flag States whose vessels operate in the region.

Moreover Comoros represents a problem of reactivity and authorities need to better understand the challenges they have to face. DG MARE is currently in a mission in Thailand and there is a willingness to cope with the issues though there are still measures to be taken by Thai authorities. Solomon Islands were mentioned as an example of a very impressive progress in its fight against IUU fishing.

In order to support MS in their work against IUU fishing DG MARE is working in an IT tool based on TRACES (EU Rapid Alert System) to identify risks analysis and verification of the implementation.

For more information about DG MARE criteria for checking developments in third countries in relation to international Sea law please see [THIS](#) presentation

- [Seafood: Investigation into EU consumers' attitudes shows sustainable supply is essential](#)
- Source DG MARE

A new Eurobarometer survey on EU consumer choices regarding fishery and aquaculture products reveals that there is a strong preference for regional, national and European origin (80%). The majority of consumers indicated that they like to try new products and species; 68% of consumers indicated that they would eat more fish if the prices were lower.

People mainly buy their seafood at the supermarket, and they look first at its appearance, then at its price and origin. Europeans trust the content of labels, especially when the information provided is

required by law. 66% think the information on products is clear and easy to understand, showing that EU labelling rules are working.

- [Commission Proposes Enhanced Market Access for Sri Lanka as Reform Incentive](#) – Source European Commission

On 11 January 2017 the Commission adopted a delegated act proposing to grant EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP+) status to Sri Lanka in exchange for the country's commitment to ratify and effectively implement 27 international conventions on human rights, labour conditions, protection of the environment and good governance. These one-way trade preferences would consist of the full removal of duties on 66% of tariff lines, covering a wide array of products including textiles and fisheries.

GSP+ arrangement has been designed to support developing countries by fostering their economic development through increased trade with Europe and providing incentives to take tangible measures towards sustainable development. The European Parliament and the Council have now up to four months to raise potential objections before the measures become effective.

EP Questions:

- [Value of fishing in Irish waters to the EU](#) - Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL)
- [Article 17 of the Basic Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy](#) - Alain Cadec (PPE)
- [Landing obligation and the Union's external fleets](#) - Alain Cadec (PPE)
- [Driftnet fishing for swordfish in the Mediterranean](#) - Clara Eugenia Aguilera García (S&D)
- [Bluefin tuna fishing quotas](#) - Marina Albiol Guzmán (GUE/NGL)
- [Toxicity of farmed salmon](#) - Georgios Eptideios (NI)
- [Commission actions in defence of small-scale coastal fishing](#) - Ruža Tomašić (ECR)

Agendas:

- [EP PECH Committee](#). 25-26 January 2017
- [EP Plenary session](#) 16-19 January
- [Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed – Section: “Biological safety of the food chain”](#) – 24 January 2017

Useful links:

- [Draft Inception Report GSP Evaluation](#)
- [Study on the subsidies to the fisheries, aquaculture, and marketing and processing subsectors in major fishing nations beyond the EU](#)
- [EUMOFA Monthly Highlights n°12/2016](#)
- [DG MARE public consultation: Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean](#)
- [EP: Illegal fishing in the south-east Asia](#)

Events:

- First General Assembly of the Advisory Committee for Markets. 17-18 January. Brussels
- [Seafood safety - new findings and innovation challenges](#) - 25-26 January, Brussels
- Nordic Food Control Conference: [New Risks/New Control Methods - Are we keeping up?.](#) 7-8 February 2017. Helsinki

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