



1 July – 31 December 2008 The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Agriculture, fisheries, the regions... Presidency highlights

Following on from Slovenia at the beginning of 2008, and preceding the Czech Republic in the first half of 2009, France will hold the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months starting on 1 July next. This is an event that is as exceptional as it is crucially important for our country. For six months, France will be speaking in the name of all the Member States. France will be the voice and the face of the Council of the European Union in the world.

Definition of a European pact on immigration and the right of asylum, the combat against climate change, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP): there are a number of substantive items on the agenda for the six months of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union. As the Union's leading policy, agriculture will not be forgotten and will play a central part in the discussions, as will fisheries and forests, especially given that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is now at a pivotal point in its history. At a time when the Member States are carrying out a CAP "health check", a process launched under the Slovene Presidency, and after the presentation by the Commission in May 2008 of its proposed legislation, France wishes to engage in discussions without delay with its partners on "a genuine refoundation of the

post-2013 CAP", during the French Presidency, as indicated by the President of the Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy, on 23 February 2008 at the International Agricultural Show in Paris.

This major debate is to be launched by Michel Barnier, the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, at the meeting of Ministers of Agriculture in Annecy in September 2008, pursuing four objectives defined by the Head of State: food security, preservation of global food balances, preservation of the environment and maintenance of regional balances. It will also be France's task to monitor the negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in order to ensure that, whatever happens, European agriculture remains viable over the long term.

In order to throw a spotlight on these ambitious objectives, a series of colloquia and meetings have been scheduled for the period from July to December 2008. Food, environment, rural development, forests, education, fisheries, energy: all these are subjects that will be discussed by the 27, with the Commission and the European Parliament, in order to define tomorrow's Common Agricultural Policy together.

1 3 July Brussels

Conference *Who will feed the world ? Towards diverse, sustainable forms of agriculture as drivers for development*

The planet will probably have nine billion inhabitants by 2050. To cope with this growth in population and the resulting challenge for food supplies, agriculture will need to double its production in the space of 30 years. The aim of this conference is to provide a presentation of the challenges for the planet's food security. It will also be an opportunity to clarify the role of agricultural production in development policies, in stimulating growth, in alleviating poverty and managing the environment. With the exceptional participation of Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO, Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the FAO and Mariann Fischer Boel, European commissioner for agriculture, among others.

2 4/5 September Limoges

Conference *The issues and the future for the European sheep industry*

The sheep industry, and especially its related meat sector, receives little CAP support. It generates the lowest levels of income in the agricultural sector despite its contribution to regional vitality and the preservation of the environment (biodiversity, pasture maintenance, etc.). It is particularly vulnerable at the present time due to rising commodity prices. The agriculture ministers of the principal countries affected in Europe (Ireland, UK, France, Spain and Romania, among others), will reflect along with industry experts and actors upon the best way to ensure the long-term viability of the industry, which involves 40,000 holdings and 6 million ewes in France.

3 21/23 September Annecy

Informal meeting of the Council of European Ministers of Agriculture and the relocated Special Agriculture Committee

In accordance with the wishes of the President of the Republic as expressed in his speech of 11 September 2007, during this informal meeting of the Council the Ministry will be launching a major in-depth debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013. This informal Council meeting will bring together, as is traditional during each Member State's occupation of the EU Presidency, all ministers with responsibility for agriculture in the European Union, at a venue conducive to technical visits to holdings and agrifood industries. This meeting provides an opportunity for informal discussions of an important point of policy. France has chosen to focus the de-

bate on the objectives defined by Europe for the Common Agricultural Policy at the 2013 horizon.

4 1/3 October Nice

Meeting of European forest directors

Forests cover 44% of Europe's land and that area is expanding. They provide wood and renewable energy, mitigate climate change by storing CO₂ and act as the main reservoir of biodiversity on land. The directors will look at the best approach to coordination that can be envisaged between Member States for the implementation of a plan of action for the EU's forests and prepare the ground for European Forest Week.

1 20 October Brussels

Launch of the Pan-European Forest Week

The aim is to draw the attention of politicians, sector professionals and the general public to the potential of Europe's forests, emphasising their role in the context of mitigation of climate change.

5 22 October Beauvais

EPODE programme meeting

France wishes to introduce its European partners to the EPODE (Ensemble, Prévenons l'Obésité Des Enfants / Working together to prevent child obesity). This innovative approach, successfully developed in 170 towns and cities in France, combines physical exercise with an exploration of food taste and nutrition.

6 23 October Nantes

Seminar *The future of the Common Agricultural Policy: proposals from the regions*

The major regions from all over Europe are invited to debate with the institutions of Europe on the changes to be made to the CAP after 2013 in order to improve its contribution to achieving proper balances between the regions, to meet the challenge of food supply in Europe, to develop production of quality and special local production, and so on. Some of these regions will already be conducting ambitious assistance policies, adding value to the two pillars of the CAP. In the presence of Michel Barnier and Marianne Fischer-Boel, the seminar will lay the foundations for a clearer role for the regions in the context of CAP implementation.

7 23/24 October Paris

European colloquium *Traditional products and food safety*

Just when the European Commission is bringing out its Green Paper on policy for quality in food products, this colloquium provides an opportunity to show,

based on feedback from successful experiments, that it is possible, applying the health rules of the European Union, to reconcile the safety of foodstuffs with the preservation of European culinary heritage. Its conclusions could provide input for the report the Commission is to draft on the application of “Hygiene Package” regulations for May 2009.

8 29/31 October Bordeaux
Conference of directors of EAGF and EAFRD paying agencies

The European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) are the two CAP funds used by the Community to finance the aid paid out every year to European farmers and growers. In each Member State, approved paying agencies are entrusted with the task of making aid payments. This conference will bring together not only the directors but also participants from the countries in the pre-accession phase, the European Commission, the Conciliation Body, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and the European Court of Auditors. It will provide, outside the usual institutional framework, an especially effective vehicle for discussion of the difficulties involved in applying Community regulations.

9 4/5 November Montpellier
Biodiversity and Agriculture: today's challenges, tomorrow's research for sustainable agriculture

The reality of declining biodiversity is visible everywhere around the world and is leading to fears that there may be consequences as major as those of climate change.

This gathering will take stock of our current knowledge of the links between agriculture and biodiversity, provide input for the national “biodiversity” strategy and introduce elements of prospective analysis, notably in conjunction with the economic simulation exercise “World Agriculture and Food in 2050” (Agrimondes) conducted by INRA and CIRAD.

10 6/8 November Nancy
European conference : The European wood & forest industry: bio-responses to the new climate and energy issues

Carbon storage, uses of wood for energy and building: Europe’s forests, which are developing, are rich with promise for efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The outcome of these discussions could be of great value as input for the negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol and the Framework Convention on Climate Change in preparing the post-2012 era (an

agreement is expected in 2009).

11 20/21 November Beaune
Meeting of rural development directors

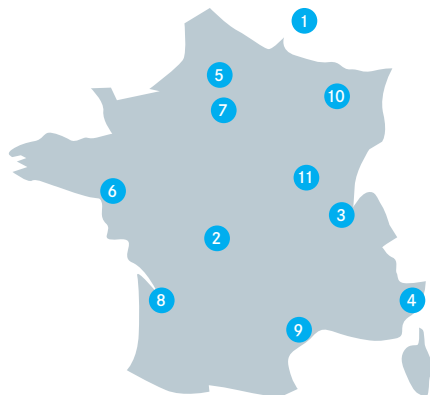
This is the first meeting of this kind during an EU Presidency. Improved coordination between Member States for the implementation of rural development programmes is expected, in addition to capitalisation on good practice and the creation of a European network of managers with responsibility for rural development.

7 24/26 November Paris
European colloquium
Sustainable agriculture and pesticides

Like other European countries, France has set itself ambitious targets for the reduction of phytosanitary products (Ecophyto 2018). This colloquium will provide an opportunity to share experience and to promote the new Community regulations currently in the process of adoption. It is planned that these exchanges will focus particularly on the following topics: reduction of pesticide-related risk, limiting pesticide use, risk surveillance and the setting up of epidemiological surveillance networks.

7 8 December Paris
Colloquium Promoting quality agricultural employment: from European commitments to responses in the field

Organised by the MSA (Mutualité Sociale Agricole), this colloquium will set out to give the French and European partners attending in Paris an opportunity to work together with the long term in mind and to pool their expertise, which will have been the subject of exchanges at the gathering, in order to encourage the development of high-quality employment in agriculture, meet the needs of agricultural enterprises and their employees and assist action in rural areas.



Agenda

There will be numerous meetings during the six months of the Presidency. In addition to special events, there are Council meetings every month in Brussels or Luxembourg of the Ministers of the 27 Member States as well as two European Council meetings at which the Heads of State will determine the strategic orientations of the European Union.

Venue	Dates	Official event title
Paris	1 jul. 08	Beginning of the French Presidency and the European cultural season
Nancy	1/2 jul.	Meeting of managers of European Forest Research Institutes.
Brussels	3 jul.	Conference: <i>Who will feed the world? Towards diverse and sustainable forms of agriculture as drivers for development</i>
Marcy l'Étoile	7/11 jul.	European seminar on procedures for slaughterhouse health inspections
Marseille	13 jul.	Summit on the Mediterranean (Heads of State)
Brussels	15 jul.	Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting
Whole of France	2 sept.	Beginning of the new European school year in agricultural training establishments
Limoges	4/5 sept.	Conference: <i>The issues and the future for the European sheep industry</i>
Anneecy	21/23 sept.	Informal council meeting of European Agriculture Ministers and the relocated Special Agriculture Committee (SAC)
Brussels	29/30 sept.	Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting
Brussels	29 sept.	Informal meeting of European Fisheries Ministers
Nice	1/3 oct.	Meeting of European Forest Directors
Strasbourg	12/15 oct.	Informal meeting of European Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs)
Brussels	15/16 oct.	European Council meeting (Heads of State)
Brussels	20 oct.	Launch of European Forest Week
Beauvais	22 oct.	Meeting of the EPODE programme (<i>Working together to prevent child obesity</i>)
Nantes	23 oct.	Seminar: <i>The Future of European Agriculture and Food Policy: Proposals from the Regions</i>
Paris	23/24 oct.	Colloquium: <i>Traditional Products and Food Safety</i>
Bordeaux	29/31 oct.	Conference of directors of EAGF and EAFRD paying agencies
Montpellier	4/5 nov.	<i>Biodiversity and Agriculture: today's challenges, tomorrow's research for sustainable agriculture</i>
Nancy	6/8 nov.	Conference: <i>The European wood/forest industry: bio-responses to the new climate and energy issues</i>
Reims	7 nov.	European Conference on Biorefineries
Beaune	20/21 nov.	Meeting of European rural development directors
Brussels	24/25 nov.	Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting
Paris	24/26 nov.	European Colloquium: <i>Sustainable Agriculture and Pesticides</i>
Paris	8 dec.	Colloquium: Promoting quality agricultural employment: from European commitments to response in the field
Brussels	11/12 dec.	European Council meeting (Heads of State)
Brussels	17/19 dec.	Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting
Prague	1 jan. 09	The Presidency of the European Union passes to the Czech Republic

You will find in video and text form all the latest news on the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union at this address: www.ue2008.fr
 And www.eu2008.fr and www.culturesfrance.com have complete details for the programme for the European cultural season.

