

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Italy Takes Over Presidency of the Council of the EU

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Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

On July 1, 2014 Italy took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Greece. The Italian Presidency marks the beginning of a new Trio program and will be the first Presidency to interact with the newly-elected European Parliament. This report provides an overview of the Agriculture and Environment Council agendas.

General Information:

Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On July 1, 2014, Italy took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Greece. Italy is holding the Presidency for the twelfth time since the establishment of the Council of the European Union. From July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, Italy will be responsible for organizing and chairing Council meetings and for representing the 28 EU Member States in negotiations with other EU institutions.

The national rotating presidencies of the EU are divided into “Trios”, groups of three Member States. The objective is to ensure continuity and consistency in the work of the Council over an 18-month period. Each Presidency Trio prepares a “Trio Program” which is an 18-month work plan setting out the Council’s key objectives. Italy together with Latvia and Luxembourg mark the beginning of a new Trio Presidency covering the period from July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2015. The [18-month work plan](#) is published on the [website](#) of the Italian Presidency. On January 1, 2015, [Latvia](#) will take over the Presidency from Italy.

The Italian Presidency comes at a critical point in time, immediately following the European Parliament elections in May 2014 and prior to the establishment of the new European Commission. Unlike the shortened calendar of activities facing the Greek Presidency due to European Parliament elections (See [GAIN Report: Greece takes over Presidency of the Council of the EU](#)), this Presidency expects an extensive and complex legislative agenda as it will be the first to work with the newly elected members of the European Parliament.

Work Program – Agriculture

CAP Reform: The Italian Presidency intends to verify the sustainability of income support instruments for farmers by monitoring their progression and implementation. Additionally, the Presidency will try to finalize the pending dossiers on “Delegated Acts” for direct payments and “the authorization scheme for vine plantation.”

Animal Cloning: The Italian Presidency has included the [two animal cloning proposals](#), both for the marketing of food from cloned animals and for animal cloning for farming purposes, as possible items to be taken up for discussion in December. Because the issue of cloning is scheduled to be raised so late in the Italian Presidency, the dossier will then be passed on to the Latvian Presidency in 2015.

Organic Farming: Special priority will be given to the proposed review of the base regulation in this sector. The Presidency intends to focus on the rules regarding control, import, and fraud repression with a goal of simplifying procedures and safeguarding the quality of organic production on the market.

Promotion Measures: The Italian Presidency will conclude a proposed revision of the rules on financing annual promotion programs for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries.

Dairy Sector: The Italian Presidency will use the presentation of the Commission report on the future of the dairy market sector after quotas to widen the debate on dairy issues.

Europe 2020 Strategy: The agricultural sector will contribute to the reflection on the mid-term review of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. This debate will be focused on new perspectives for young farmers as a way to combat unemployment.

Lisbon: The Italian Presidency will ensure the Lisbon alignment of Regulations and Acts referring to aromatized wines, spirits and tariff quotas for meat imports.

Animal Health: A priority for this Presidency is to work on the proposal for an EU Regulation on animal health. Reinforcement of the epidemiological surveillance system for certain diseases (e.g. Avian Influenza, Blue Tongue, West Nile) will be proposed. A global conference on animal health will be held in Italy, in agreement with the Commission and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

Veterinary Issues: The Italian Presidency will encourage a review of Regulations on veterinary medicines and the use of medicated feed in farm animal therapy to achieve a reduction in the use of antibiotics in animal products.

Novel Foods: The Presidency is committed to reaching an agreement with the European Parliament on the Novel Foods proposal.

Food Safety: The review of [Regulation 882/2004](#) on official controls is in progress through the proposal for [Regulation 256/2013](#) in an effort to update health and safety regulations throughout the agro-food chain. The Italian Presidency will engage with the review of the Regulations on protection against harmful organisms for plants, the production and marketing of plant propagation material, and official controls and activities intended to ensure the application of laws on plant health and phytosanitary production.

School Fruit and Milk Scheme: The Presidency will pursue discussion on the Commission proposal for the school fruit and milk scheme.

Zootechnical Legislation: The Italian Presidency intends to pursue discussion on the Commission proposals on zootechnical legislation.

Forests: The Italian Presidency will address the Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe, the implementation of the new EU Forestry Strategy, and the launch of EU coordination for the preparation of Council conclusions for the 11th session of the UN Forum on Forests.

Italian Presidency Calendar

Issues of interest to FAS/USEU and FAS in the Member States are discussed in meetings of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council and the Environment Council. Because the Italian Presidency wants to create a direct link between the Presidency and the [Milan 2015 Expo](#), Milan will be the location for informal meetings of the Agriculture and Environment Councils. The theme of the Milan Expo in 2015

is “Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life.”

Agriculture and Fisheries:

- July 14, 2014 (Brussels)
 - Work Program of the Presidency
 - Organic farming policy debate
 - Draft Council conclusions on the future of the dairy sector
 - International agricultural trade issues
 - Communication from the Commission concerning a consultation on Fishing Opportunities for 2015
- October 13-14, 2014 (Luxembourg)
 - Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries (First reading)
 - Organic farming policy debate
 - Europe 2020 Strategy: Mid-term review
 - International agricultural trade issues
- November 10-11, 2014 (Brussels)
 - Council Decision establishing a Union position on OIV draft resolutions which, if adopted by the OIV, would affect the Union acquis
 - Organic farming policy debate
 - Proposal for a Regulation as regards the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in the educational establishments (First reading)
 - New Common Fisheries Policy: Long-Term Management Plans
- December 15-16, 2014 (Brussels)
 - Proposal for a Regulation regarding the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in the educational establishments (First reading)
 - Proposal for a Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products, Proposal for a Directive on the cloning of animals of the bovine, porcine, ovine, caprine and equine species kept and reproduced for farming purposes (First reading)
 - Proposal for a Directive on the marketing of food from cloned animals
 - Proposal for a Regulation on the zootechnical and genealogical conditions for trade in and imports into the Union of breeding animals and their germinal products (First reading)
 - Proposal for a Regulation on protective measures against pests of plants (First reading)
 - Proposal for a Regulation laying down specific rules for the organization of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption (First reading)
 - Proposal on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material (plant reproductive material law)
 - Proposal for a Regulation on Animal Health (First reading)
 - Proposal for a Regulation on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health, plant reproductive material, plant protection products (First reading)

Environment:

- October 28, 2014 (Luxembourg)

- Preparations for the 20th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 20) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 10th session of the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 10) (Lima, Peru, 1-12 December 2014)
- Greening the European semester and the Europe 2020 Strategy - Mid-term review (*Public debate in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Council's Rules of Procedure*)
- December 17, 2014 (Brussels)
 - Proposal for a Directive on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants (First reading)
 - Waste package orientation debate
 - The overarching post 2015 agenda
 - Work programme of the incoming presidency

Links

- [Italian Presidency website](#)
- [Milan Expo 2015](#)
- [Latvian Presidency website](#)