

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 7/16/2013

GAIN Report Number: E80033

EU-27

Post: Brussels USEU

Lithuanian Presidency Priorities for the Agriculture Sector

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Approved By:

Maurice House

Prepared By:

Hilde Brans

Report Highlights:

On July 1, 2013, Lithuania took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Ireland. This report provides an overview of the Lithuanian EU Presidency priorities for the agriculture sector.

General Information:

Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union

On July 1, 2013, Lithuania took over the rotating six-month Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Ireland. Lithuania is the first of the Baltic States to preside over the EU's decision-making process. The start of the Lithuanian Presidency coincided with the accession of Croatia to the EU. From July 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013, Lithuania will be responsible for planning and chairing Council meetings and for representing the 28 EU Member States in negotiations with the other European Parliament and the European Commission.

The national rotating presidencies of the EU are divided into "Trios", i.e. groups of three Member States. The objective is to ensure 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. Ireland, Lithuania and Greece constitute the current Trio Presidency covering the period from January 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. The 18-month work plan for the current Trio Presidency was published on the Irish Presidency website at <http://eu2013.ie/media/eupresidency/content/documents/Trio-Programme.pdf>.

The Lithuanian Presidency comes at a crucial point in time, less than a year before the European Parliament elections in May 2014 and the European Commission concluding its mandate later that year. This Presidency expects an extensive and complex legislative agenda as the EU institutions will seek to conclude key policy dossiers before legislative activity slows down over the first half of 2014. The Lithuanian Presidency will focus on three main goals: a "credible", "growing" and "open" Europe.

Work Program - Agriculture

CAP Reform: Political agreement on most parts of the CAP Reform proposals was reached under the Irish Presidency. The Lithuanian Presidency will work on the finalization of the CAP reform and initiate the work on implementing rules. Particular attention will be paid to the adoption (under co-decision) of transitional rules relating to the system of direct payments and rural development. The provisions of this proposal should ensure a smooth transition in 2014 from the current CAP regulations to the new rules under the reformed CAP.

Smarter Rules for Safer Foods Package: On May 6, 2013, the European Commission presented a package of five proposals, to be adopted under co-decision, to revise the current rules on animal and plant health, plant reproductive materials and official controls in the food and feed chain. Discussion on this package of proposals with the Commission and the European Parliament will continue under the Lithuanian Presidency. Political agreement will be sought on a proposal for the management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health and animal welfare, plant health and plant reproductive material.

Cloning: The Lithuanian Presidency is ready to start negotiations on the upcoming Commission proposal for a regulation on animal cloning for food production.

Honey: The Lithuanian Presidency will continue the work on the revision of the honey directive which proposes to define pollen as a natural constituent of honey and not as an ingredient.

Medicated Feedingstuffs, Hygiene Package and Zootechnical Legislation: The Lithuanian Presidency will start negotiations on the upcoming review of the medicated feedingstuffs directive, the hygiene package and zootechnical legislation.

Promotion Measures: The Lithuanian Presidency will start the discussion on a Commission proposal for a new strategy to promote EU agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries.

Fruit and Vegetable Regime: The Lithuanian Presidency will lead the discussion on a Commission report evaluating the single market organization rules in the fruit and vegetables sector.

ILUC: Following the vote on the Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) for biofuels directive in the European Parliament Plenary in September, the Lithuanian Presidency will seek “significant progress” in the Environment and Energy Councils.

Forestry: The Lithuanian Presidency will propose to adopt Council conclusions on the upcoming Commission Communication on the EU Forestry Strategy and ask for a mandate to represent the EU in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in order to negotiate a legally binding agreement on sustainable forest management in Europe.

Lisbon: The Lithuanian Presidency will continue work on aligning existing legislation to the Lisbon Treaty.

Links

- The full program of the Lithuanian EU Presidency can be downloaded from their website at http://static.eu2013.lt/uploads/documents/Programos/Programa_EN.pdf.
- [Speech by the Lithuanian Minister of Agriculture at the European Parliament Agriculture and Rural Development Committee \(July 9, 2013\)](#)
- [Speech by the Lithuanian Minister of Agriculture at the European Parliament Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee \(July 10, 2013\)](#)
- [Speech by the Lithuanian Minister of Environment at the European Parliament Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee \(July 10, 2013\)](#)

Lithuania's EU Calendar

The main points of interest to FAS/USEU and FAS in the EU Member States will be addressed in meetings of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council and the Environment Council.

Agriculture and Fisheries

- July 15: Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting (Brussels)

- Work Program of the Presidency
- Follow-up on the CAP Reform
- Mislabeling of beef products
- Fishing opportunities for 2014
- July 21: Meeting of Chairmen of Committees on Rural Affairs on issues of reform of CAP (Vilnius)
- September 3: Meeting of the Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers of the Council of the European Union (Vilnius)
- September 8-10: Informal meeting of Agriculture and fisheries Ministers (Vilnius)
- September 23: Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting (Brussels)
 - Proposal on information provision and promotion measures for agricultural products on the internal market and in third countries
 - Proposal on animal cloning (presentation by the Commission)
 - Forest strategy (Commission Communication)
- September 25: Meeting of the advisors to the European Food Safety Authority (Vilnius)
- September 30-October 1: Conference “Framing the challenges of European agricultural research – innovation, stakeholder involvement and the supply and production chain” (Vilnius)
- October 17-18: Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting (Luxembourg)
 - Review of the EU fruit and vegetables regime (presentation by the Commission)
 - European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
- November 18-19: Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting (Brussels)
 - CAP Reform package
- December 16-17 Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting (Brussels)
 - Animal Health, Plant Health, Seeds, Controls (Smarter Rules for Safer Foods) package
 - 2014 fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks in the Black Sea

Environment

- October 14: Environment Council meeting (Luxembourg)
 - Preparations for the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 9th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
- December 13: Environment Council meeting (Brussels)
 - Framework for climate and energy policies
 - renewable energy proposal