

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

Trade Policy Monitoring

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**Report Highlights:**

On July 1, 2015, Luxembourg took over the six-month rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Key priorities of the Luxembourg Presidency include TTIP, a new inter-institutional agreement on better regulation, a new regulatory framework for organic farming and the impact of the Russian embargo on certain EU agricultural products.

## **Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

On July 1, 2015, Luxembourg took over for the twelfth time the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the next six month period. The EU's rotating EU presidencies are divided into "trios", i.e. groups of three Member States. The objective is to ensure continuity and consistency in the Council's work over an 18-month period. Each Trio Presidency prepares an 18-month work plan setting out the Council's priorities. The Luxembourg Presidency concludes the Italian-Latvian-Luxembourg Trio Presidency. Luxembourg is working closely together with the outgoing presidency of Latvia and with the previous presidency of Italy. The Trio Presidency Program can be downloaded from the Luxembourg Presidency's website at <http://www.eu2015lu.eu/en/la-presidence/a-propos-presidence/qu-est-ce-que-presidence-du-conseil-ue/index.html>.

Luxembourg last presided over the Council in 2005. This Presidency will be carried out in an institutional environment that has changed substantially since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Updating the Inter-institutional Agreement on Better Regulation, part of the "Better Regulation Package" released by the European Commission on May 19, 2015, will be one of the Luxembourg Presidency's priorities. Tripartite negotiations will take place under the Luxembourg Presidency and address issues such as annual and multi-annual programming, impact assessments and the adoption of delegated and implementing acts. The Luxembourg Presidency's program aims to implement the "[Strategic Agenda For The Union in Times of Change](#)" which the European Council adopted in June 2014 and sets out the EU's key priorities for the next five years.

### **Luxembourg Presidency Work Program**

The following is an overview of the Presidency's priorities presented by Luxembourg Ministers to various European Parliamentary committees:

#### **International Trade**

Regarding international trade, the Presidency plans to restructure the instrument used to resolve investor-state disputes. On the international trade platform, the Presidency will prioritize the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). Concerning the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the Presidency plans to review the possibility of constructing a unified system that utilizes courts, judges, public hearings and the appeals process. Finalizing a trade arrangement with Vietnam is also among the Presidency's list of trade priorities. Other possible trade deals mentioned include an agreement with Japan, Tunisia, and India.

#### **Constitutional Affairs**

The presidency hopes to finalize a new inter-institutional agreement regarding improved regulation by the close of 2015. The Commission proposal for an updated inter-institutional agreement is part of the "Better Regulation Package," presented by the Commission on May 19, 2015.

#### **Agriculture and Rural Development**

The Presidency will focus on simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and seek to launch negotiations with the European Parliament on protective actions against plant pests and the medicated feed proposal as well as the organic farming reform. The Presidency also committed to helping the most affected sectors hit by the recently extended Russian embargo and to monitor the reformed milk and sugar markets.

### **Environment and Public Health**

As regards food safety, the Luxembourg Environment Minister highlighted “the importance of the ongoing legislative procedures” on cloning, GMO imports, novel foods, and official controls in the agri-food chain.

### **Fisheries**

The Luxembourg Presidency intends to focus on implementing the new rules of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in three key areas: establish sustainable fishing quota for 2016, share and simplify scientific data on the status of fish stocks and develop multiannual management plans for the Baltic Sea.

### **Luxembourg 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.

### **Agriculture and Fisheries Council:**

- July 13, 2015 (Brussels)
  - School fruit and milk schemes
  - GMOs import proposal
  
- September 7, 2015 (Brussels): Extraordinary Agriculture Council meeting
  - In light of the economic crisis, the Luxembourg Presidency has called to convene a special Agriculture Council meeting to discuss dairy and livestock farming.
  
- September 14, 2015 (Luxembourg)
  - Informal meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries (agenda not yet available)

- October 22, 2015 (Luxembourg)
  - Fisheries
- November 16, 2015 (Brussels)
  - Simplification of the CAP
  - Animal and plant health package
- December 14, 2015 (Brussels)
  - Medicated feed proposal
  - GMO import proposal
  - Fisheries

### **Environment Council**

- July 18, 2015 (Brussels)
- July 22, 2015 (Luxembourg)
- September 18, 2015 (Brussels)
- October 26, 2015 (Luxembourg)
- December 16, 2015 (Brussels)