



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on agri-environmental indicators

*2774th AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting
Brussels, 19 December 2006*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

CONSIDERS that the implementation of the Council strategy on environmental integration and sustainable development in the Common Agricultural Policy needs continuous monitoring and evaluation based on reliable figures. This is necessary in order to meet the growing policy needs and to be able to adjust and deepen the strategy in the future;

RECOGNISES that agri-environmental indicators are one of the tools for identifying and assessing the impact of policy decisions, identifying shortcomings in current measures and needs for new policy initiatives, helping to plan new measures and, where appropriate, improving the targeting and tailoring of the measures to local conditions;

RECOGNISES that, to this end, a coherent set of agri-environmental indicators is required, which is able to capture the regional diversity of agricultural production systems and structures (e.g., specialisations, production patterns, farming methods, farm sizes) and environmental conditions (e.g., soil type, climate, hydro-geological situation, biodiversity), as well as the positive and negative influences that these production systems and structures exert on the environment;

NOTES that the two previous Commission Communications on Indicators for the Integration of Environmental Concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy¹ and on Statistical Information Needed for Indicators to Monitor the Integration of Environmental Concerns into the Common

¹ Doc. 5742/00 COM (2000) 20.

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Agricultural Policy² provide a coherent analytical framework for the development of such indicators;

WELCOMES the work undertaken so far by the Commission with regard to the development of agri-environmental indicators, and in particular the progress made through the IRENA operation;

RECOGNISES the need to overcome the weaknesses which at present limit the information potential of certain indicators. In this respect, there is a specific need for comparable data to be generated on agricultural activities, at the appropriate geographical level, and covering the whole Community, using, as far as possible, existing data sources and data collection structures;

CONSIDERS the list of 28 indicators proposed in the Annex to the Commission Communication on Development of agri-environmental indicators for monitoring the integration of environmental concerns into the common agricultural policy³ from 2006 as the starting point for the future work on agri-environmental indicators. This list, which is the outcome of the IRENA operation and which has been selected for its relevance for policy-making, could be subject to further adjustments, in particular, as a result of future policy requirements or on the basis of experience with the further development of the indicators and their use in policy making;

CALLS UPON the Commission to undertake the actions proposed in the 2006 Commission Communication, in close cooperation with the relevant national institutions of the Member States. This concerns in particular the consolidation of the proposed set of indicators, the extension of the coverage to the new Member States and the correction of existing weaknesses;

CONSIDERS that the Commission, together with the Member States, should take close account of the costs and resource implications of any new initiative related to data collection that goes beyond existing legal requirements;

RECOGNISES the need for a long-term information system for monitoring environmental integration to be set up, CALLS UPON the Commission to establish a more stable and permanent arrangement for the management of the indicator system on the basis of close cooperation with the Member States. The Eurostat's Standing Committee for Agricultural Statistics shall be actively involved in this process, particularly in relation to the identification and allocation of responsibilities among the partner institutions, including the systematic collection and delivery of the data necessary for the compilation, maintenance and updating of the indicators."

² Doc. 7387/01 COM (2001) 144.

³ Doc. 12973/08 COM (2006) 508.

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