



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on International competitiveness of the European agri-food model

*3025th AGRICULTURE and FISHERIES Council meeting
Luxembourg, 29 June 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

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During the Spanish Presidency the question of the competitiveness of the agri-food model was discussed in various fora, both in the Council and in the European Parliament. The following conclusions can be drawn from those Council discussions, without prejudice to the new multiannual financial framework for the period after 2013:

- All parties considered this discussion relevant and timely at the moment.
- There was a broad consensus that the European production model, with its high standards, is a major part of our heritage which it is important to preserve.
- It was acknowledged at the same time that this production model presents opportunities, such as the benefits that higher standards generate, but also challenges in terms of competitiveness in today's global market. Both elements should be considered if we are to ensure and to promote its sustainability.
- One way to face this challenge would be to promote our model and convert it into a real market opportunity, both internally and externally.
- Improving information and the efficiency of the information tools is a key element in providing solutions, including inter alia promotion instruments.
- In this respect, efforts should be made in order to improve the functioning of the current promotion instruments, both in the EU and in third country markets.

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- Within the framework of international law, it is relevant to acknowledge the need for a level playing field between the EU and third country producers, concerning the EU standards, which recognise that consumers' demands and any societal concerns (such as quality, health, environment and animal welfare) are met.
 - Effective control systems in Member States are a key element. It is important to ensure effective sanitary and phyto-sanitary controls at agreed points of Community entry at the EU's external borders, or at places of destination where applicable and useful.
 - In this regard, the Council looks forward to receiving the report to be submitted to it by the Commission by the end of 2010 on the effectiveness and consistency of sanitary and phyto-sanitary controls on imports of food, feed, animals and plants, with a view to continuing a well-functioning Community framework on imports, along with proposals, if appropriate.
 - At international level, promotion of the model will come through having it recognised in international negotiations, thus strengthening the European Union's role as an important player in the establishment of international rules. The role of quality schemes, including Geographical Indications, should be reinforced in order to fully take advantage of their potential.
 - At internal level the following action points were identified:
 - Consumers should have the necessary information about our model to give them a real opportunity to choose, including appropriate labelling of agricultural products.
 - Simplification, evaluation, and impact assessment are essential tools to be used systematically to reduce unnecessary costs and the administrative burden for business.
 - The operation of the food chain should be improved, as was recognised during the discussions at the March 2010 Agricultural Council.
 - Research and innovation should be strengthened as the key tool in improving competitiveness and sustainability in internal and external markets.
 - There is a necessity to ensure that there are EU instruments designed to help farmers meet the societal concerns and consumers demands that are not taken into account by the market.
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