AGRIFISH COUNCIL

AOB BY ES PRESIDENCY

NEW GENOMIC TECHNIQUES

BRIEFING

20 November 2023, 11:30

Brussels
1. Steering note

Description of the agenda, the topic to be discussed and the context

The AGRIFISH Council meeting on 20 November 2023 will be held in Brussels and chaired by the BE Minister of the incoming Presidency, David Clarinval.

There is one item on the agenda under your responsibility:

- AOB – New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) – information point by ES Presidency and AOB by HR

The item is expected to be taken between 11:50 and 12:20 in public session.

A presentation of the NGT proposal took place in the July AGRIFISH.

The file is a priority for the ES Presidency, whose intention is to agree on a general approach at the December AGRIFISH Council.

The ES Presidency intends to inform the Ministers on the progress of the negotiations on the proposal.

The background paper of the ES Presidency provides an objective description of the state of play of the file but does not introduce any specific questions to guide the discussion.

Also, HR asked for an AOB on NGTs listing the elements in their background paper being essential for HR to accept the proposal:

- Member States should be able to make independent decisions regarding the possible restriction or prohibition of the cultivation of NGT plants on their
own territory or part of the territory, so called ‘opt-out’. As a compromise HR suggest ‘opt-out’ temporarily for 7 years, after which the Commission assesses the overall effect, with the possibility for MS to revise the ‘opt-out’;

- Inclusion of risk assessment to precautionary principle to avoid negative effect on human and animal health, environment and biodiversity;

- Right to full ban on the use of both NGT category plants in organic farming and adequately address the issue of coexistence, including responsibilities, in the legislative act;

- Avoid privatisation of genetic resources and the creation of monopolies in the context of patents.

ES will present the point, followed by Member States’ interventions (1 minutes/MS). You will be given the floor at the end.

You will be accompanied from your CAB by Annukka Ojala, Deputy Head of your Cabinet, Roberto Reig Rodrigo, Member of your Cabinet, [ ], blue book trainee.

From DG SANTE Claire Bury, Deputy-Director General for Food Sustainability and [ ] from DG SANTE’s Inter-institutional relation’s unit (A2) will join you in the meeting room.
2. Objective

- To welcome the progress made on the negotiations on the proposal on plants obtained by NGT and to encourage all parties to continue constructive discussions to find an agreement as soon as possible, ideally by December AGRIFISH Council, without losing sight of the key objectives of the initiative.
3. State of play/background information

Seven Council Working Party meetings (altogether 13 days) have taken place between July and November 2023, with further two meetings scheduled until the end of ES Presidency (altogether 4 days). An additional attaché meeting should take place on 30 November 2023 to prepare 6 December COREPER discussion.

The Presidency has tabled a compromise text covering the whole proposal, at this point mainly clarifying various provisions and not containing substantial changes. The compromise text has been generally well received by delegations.

The Presidency intends to table further compromise texts in November, where they will try to tackle the more substantial issues.
Briefing Contributors: (unit E3)

Briefing Coordinator: (unit A2)

SANTE colleagues attending the meeting: Claire Bury, Deputy Director-General, Food sustainability (DG SANTE), (A2)