RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

31st Meeting, 2009 (Session 3)

Wednesday 16 December 2009

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 3.

1. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to take item 4 in private.

2. **Subordinate legislation:** The Committee will consider the following negative instruments—

   - the Rural Development Contracts (Rural Priorities) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 4) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/411);
   - the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/412);
   - the Sea Fishing (Prohibition on the Removal of Shark Fins) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2009 (SSI 2009/413);
   - the Sheep and Goats (Identification and Traceability) (Scotland) Revocation Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/415);
   - the Zoonoses and Animal By-Products (Fees) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/416);
   - the Control of Salmonella in Turkey Flocks (Scotland) Order 2009 (SSI 2009/417);
   - the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Variation of Schedule 4) (Scotland) Order 2009 (SSI 2009/418); and
   - the Wildlife and Countryside (Registration and Ringing of Certain Captive Birds) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/419).
3. **UK Flood and Water Management Bill (UK Parliament legislation):** The Committee will consider its approach to the legislative consent memorandum lodged by Richard Lochhead MSP (LCM(S3)24.1).

4. **Work programme:** The Committee will consider its work programme in relation to the Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill, forthcoming European issues, and the possible commissioning of research on aspects of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.

Peter McGrath  
Clerk to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
Tel: 0131 348 5240  
Email: peter.mcgrath@scottish.parliament.uk
The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda Item 2**

The Rural Development Contracts (Rural Priorities) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 4) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/411)

The Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/412)

The Sea Fishing (Prohibition on the Removal of Shark Fins) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2009 (SSI 2009/413)

The Sheep and Goats (Identification and Traceability) (Scotland) Revocation Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/415)

The Zoonoses and Animal By-Products (Fees) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/416)

The Control of Salmonella in Turkey Flocks (Scotland) Order 2009 (SSI 2009/417)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Variation of Schedule 4) (Scotland) Order 2009 (SSI 2009/418)

The Wildlife and Countryside (Registration and Ringing of Certain Captive Birds) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (SSI 2009/419)

Extract from Subordinate Legislation Committee report (to follow)

**Agenda Item 3**

Paper from the Clerk

**Agenda Item 4**

Paper from the Clerk - Crofting Reform (Scotland) Bill (private)

Paper from the Clerk - European issues (private)

Paper from the Clerk - Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 (private)

**For Information**

Recent Developments
RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Legislative Consent Memorandum on UK Flood and Water Management Bill

Note by the Clerk

Introduction
1. The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment lodged a legislative consent memorandum (Annexe A) in relation to the UK Flood and Water Management Bill on Monday 30 November. The Parliamentary Bureau has designated the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee as lead Committee to consider and report on the legislative consent memorandum.

Background
2. Legislative consent motions may be lodged where the UK Parliament is seeking to legislate in devolved areas (ie on the basis of the so-called Sewel Convention).

3. To inform the Parliament’s consideration of any such motion, the Bureau designates a lead committee to consider the legislative consent memorandum for the motion. That Committee must then report on it to the Parliament. So as to allow the Committee’s findings on the memorandum to be given due consideration, the motion cannot be taken in the Chamber until five sitting days after the report’s publication. The initial indication from the Scottish Government is that a report be published by late January.

4. As detailed in the memorandum, the UK Government is requesting consent from the Scottish Parliament for an enabling power to be included into the Reservoirs Act 1975 which will allow the UK Government to make regulations for reservoirs which sit on the border between Scotland and England. The enabling power seeks to ensure that these reservoirs are subject to a single enforcement regime with the UK Parliament legislating for the Scottish portion of the cross border reservoirs. The memorandum also notes that the Scottish Government intends to introduce a reservoir safety bill during the 2010/11 legislative programme.

Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009
5. The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 amends the Reservoirs Act 1975 by transferring enforcement responsibilities from local authorities to SEPA. The importance of ensuring a co-ordinated cross-border implementation of legislation was highlighted in the Committee’s Stage 1 report. The report also raised concerns over the delay in implementation of the provisions in the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 if the UK Flood and Water Management Bill was not to be introduced until the

1 For further information on the Bill see: http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html
next UK parliamentary session, as was anticipated at the time by local authorities in evidence to the Committee. In response to these concerns, recommendation 30 of the report requested that a summary of how the introduction of the UK Bill will impact on the implementation of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 be provided by the Scottish Government. An extract of the Stage 1 report is in Annexe B.

Options for scrutiny

6. Given the limited provisions impacting on Scotland highlighted in the memorandum, and the likelihood of the Committee being called upon to scrutinise a scottish reservoir safety bill in 2010/11, the Committee could agree to produce a brief report stating that it is content with the legislative consent memorandum and welcoming the UK Government’s introduction of legislation in this area earlier than anticipated. The Committee could also agree to write to the Cabinet Secretary requesting information on how the provisions in the UK Bill interrelate with the Scottish Act, specifically the implementation of Part 7.

7. An alternative option would be for the Committee to agree to write to SEPA, given its role in Scotland under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, to ask whether it is content with the proposal in the legislative consent memorandum. The Committee could then briefly take evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, or the Minister for Environment, on the legislative consent memorandum in the New Year. This session could also cover how the timing of the UK Bill will impact on the implementation of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 in relation to reservoirs.

Timetable

8. Should the Committee want to take evidence on the memorandum, the 13 January meeting would appear to provide the best opportunity. If so, the Committee could then consider a draft report at its meeting on 20 January (and again at a later meeting should the time available for consideration allow).

Recommendation

9. The Committee is invited to discuss the two options outlined above and to agree its approach to the consideration of the legislative consent memorandum.
Draft Legislative Consent Motion

1. The draft motion, which will be lodged by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, is:

“That the Parliament agrees that the relevant provisions of the Flood and Water Management Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 19 November 2009, relating to reservoirs which sit on the border between Scotland and England, so far as these matters fall within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, should be considered by the UK Parliament.”

Background

2. This memorandum has been lodged by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, under Rule 9.B.3.1(a) of the Parliament's standing orders. The Flood and Water Management Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 19 November 2009. The Bill can be found at:

http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/floodandwatermanagement.html

Content of Bill

Flood and Water Management Bill

3. The Bill covers a wide range of issues which are devolved to the Scottish Parliament and so its main provisions are only relevant to England and Wales. The provisions include flood and coastal erosion risk management and risk management: designation of features and reservoir safety improvements.

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management & Risk Management: designation of features.

4. These parts deal with flood risk management and are intended to deliver greater security for people and their property from the risk of flooding and coastal erosion by creating clearer structures and responsibilities for managing that risk;

5. Scotland has already enacted legislation which encompasses the flood risk management elements of the Bill through the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.
Reservoirs

6. The Flood and Water Management Bill will amend the Reservoirs Act 1975 and create an improved and risk-based regime to manage reservoir safety.

7. Some of the proposed amendments to the Reservoirs Act 1975 have already been introduced in Scotland through the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 including provisions for flood plans and post-incident reporting. The Scottish Government also intends to bring forward similar changes to those proposed to the Reservoirs Act 1975 for Scotland through a Reservoir Safety Bill during the 2010/11 legislative programme in the Scottish Parliament.

8. The only provision in the Bill which amends the Reservoirs Act 1975 which will be subject to the Legislative Consent Motion is the enabling power for cross border reservoir regulations. The enabling power will be subject to consultation with Scottish Ministers.

Other Provisions in the Bill

9. These parts deal with SUDS, third party assets, surface water drainage and hosepipe bans. Scotland has already enacted legislation which encompasses some of these elements of the Bill through the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.

Issue Subject to the Consent of the Scottish Parliament and reasons for seeking a Legislative Consent Motion.

10. The area of the Bill for which the consent of the Scottish Parliament is sought is the enabling power which will be inserted into the Reservoirs Act 1975 which allows the UK Government to make regulations for reservoirs which sit on the border between Scotland and England.

11. To ensure these reservoirs are subject to a single enforcement regime, the UK Parliament would need to legislate for the Scottish portion of the cross border reservoirs. In order to do this the Scottish Parliament has to agree to the UK Government legislating on this matter through an LCM under the Sewel convention.

Financial Implications

12. There are no financial implications.

Conclusion

13. The view of the Scottish Government is that it is in the interests of good governance and an effective enforcement system for reservoir safety that the provision in the Flood and Water Management Bill relating to reservoirs which sit on the border between Scotland and England, so far as these matters fall
within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament should be considered by the UK Parliament.

Water, Air, Soils and Flooding Division
November 2009

ANNEXE B

EXTRACT FROM THE RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE’S STAGE 1 REPORT ON THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL

PART 7: RESERVOIRS

207. Part 7 amends the Reservoirs Act 1975, which sets out safety requirements to prevent escapes of water from reservoirs. The amendments would have the effect of transferring enforcement responsibilities from local authorities to SEPA. This would include provisions to allow SEPA to prepare reservoir maps and plans for very high risk reservoirs.

208. The possibility of a delay in the implementation of a number of these provisions has been raised with the Committee as outlined below.

Transfer of responsibilities

209. Jim Moodie, Fife Council, stated in evidence that Scottish Government officials had suggested that the handover of responsibilities could take two to three years as the Scottish Government wishes to consider the nature of provisions to tighten reservoir security in the UK Flood and Water Bill before implementing its own Bill’s provisions.

210. In evidence, the Minister informed the Committee that the Flood and Water Bill is unlikely to be considered at Westminster until the next UK parliamentary session.

211. The Committee acknowledges the merits of ensuring that the Bill is implemented in such a way that it complements comparable legislation in England and Wales. This is in the interests of co-ordinated cross border implementation. The Committee intends to continue to monitor the Scottish Government’s progress towards the transfer of responsibilities to SEPA.

212. The Committee requests a summary of the impact of the provisions of the UK Flood and Water Bill on the implementation of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Bill as soon as is practicable following the UK Bill’s introduction.


RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE’S REMIT

Note by the Clerk: Each time an agenda and papers for a meeting are circulated to members, a short paper like this one will also be included as a means of alerting members to relevant documents of general interest which they can follow up through the links included.

**Marine (Scotland) Bill**

A letter has been received from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment relating to the Committee’s work on the Marine (Scotland) Bill. The letter, dated 30 November, introduces a report to Marine Scotland based on work undertaken by the Scottish Coastal Forum entitled “Scottish Marine Regions”. The letter and the report’s executive summary are in Annexe A. Hard copies of the report are available from the Clerks on request. It can also be read in full online at:


**Fisheries**

The Cabinet Secretary has written to the Committee giving further information on Nephrops Functional Units, which was raised at the Committee’s meeting on 11 November. The letter is in Annexe B.

**Agriculture and Fisheries Council Meeting**

The Cabinet Secretary has written to provide the Committee with a report on the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting which he attended in Brussels on 20 November. The letter and report are in Annexe C.

**Radioactivity in Food and the Environment**

A joint report has been published by the Environment Agency, Food Standards Agency, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. The report, entitled ‘Radioactivity in Food and the Environment 2008’ combines the results from the radiological monitoring programmes undertaken by these agencies. Hard copies of the report are available from the Clerks on request. It can also be read online by selecting ‘RIFE 14’ at:

National Park Authorities appointment extensions

Ten members of the National Park Authorities (seven for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and three for the Cairngorms) have had their appointments extended. The corresponding Scottish Government news release can be viewed online:


Farmers' Markets

The Scottish Government has issued a news release announcing extra funding for farmers’ markets. The news release can be viewed online at:


EU Commissioner nominations

The proposed new European Commission has been announced. Maria Damanaki has been proposed for the position of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Commissioner, and Dacian Ciolos has been proposed for the position of Agriculture Commissioner. Full details of the new commission designate can be read online at:


Annexe A

Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

Scottish Marine Regions ~ A report to Marine Scotland on the views of an external stakeholders’ workshop

Throughout the evidence taking sessions you and the other members of the RAE Committee have expressed great interest in the boundaries of the Scottish Marine Regions. During the evidence session I mentioned that a stakeholder workshop had been undertaken on the criteria for establishing Scottish Marine Region boundaries and that I would provide a copy of the final report when it became available.

I am now in the position to be able to provide this report, as enclosed, which I hope you will find useful. The report will provide useful information for the consultation process on the characteristics that would be important in drawing up Scottish Marine Region boundaries. This can only proceed where the Scottish Parliament
agree to the proposals within the Marine (Scotland) Bill with regards to designation of Scottish Marine Regions."

RICHARD LOCHHEAD
CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
30 November 2009

Scottish Marine Regions report - Executive Summary

Scotland’s first Marine Bill will provide fit-for-purpose legislation to deliver planning, development, management and stewardship of Scotland’s coastal and marine resources. The Bill is intended to allow sustainable economic growth within environmental limits. It will set the framework for a National Marine Plan to address national priorities within social, economic and environmental parameters and allow for Regional Marine Plans to create a more localised sense of ownership of marine planning. To achieve this, a number of Scottish Marine Regions are proposed.

The Scottish Coastal Forum was asked by the Scottish Government to carry out a short project to gauge stakeholders’ thoughts on how Scottish Marine Regions (SMRs) might be defined. A workshop was held in Edinburgh on 13 March 2009 to generate views from an audience of largely non-Government participants that could be fed into the internal consideration of options for consultation.

Before the event, delegates were asked to identify the top 5 criteria that should be considered in the definition process and over 130 separate criteria were listed. Pre-event analysis broke down these criteria into seven named categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical characteristics/ecosystems</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilisation of existing models &amp; units</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for specifically marine areas &amp; features</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate scale</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary legislation issues</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data availability</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other suggestions</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the workshop, delegates discussed these criteria further and prioritised them. GIS was provided so they could visualise existing administrative divisions for terrestrial, marine, social, economic and environmental considerations. This allowed the opportunity to consider whether a combination of existing boundaries might offer a ‘ready made’ division of the Scottish coastline for marine planning.

The conclusions drawn from the workshop can be summarised as:

- Stakeholders are keen to know how local marine planning is to be delivered
• One model will not fit all cases – different options are required, and accepted as being required, for different areas

• Initial assessment of notified criteria concluded that physical characteristics / ecosystem drivers were most important for defining SMRs

• However, when all contributions were analysed, a greater number of responses suggested using existing administrative units, e.g. Inshore Fisheries Groups, as the basis for Scottish Marine Regions.

• The major mainland Firths should be the focal point/basis for some Scottish Marine Regions and, if at all possible, should not be divided but should be treated as a cohesive unit

• Shetland should be a Scottish Marine Region

• It was less clear whether the Western Isles and Orkney should also be SMRs in their own right, taking advantage of the position of their local authorities, or whether they should be part of SMRs focused on the Minch and Pentland Firth respectively: this is not a straight choice between physical characteristics and administrative arrangements but has some strongly emotive issues attached

• On the day, when asked to rank the key criteria in order of importance, physical characteristics/ecosystem drivers came out on top, narrowly beating existing models and administrative units; all other potential criteria received considerably less support

• Recognised that Scottish Marine Regions should be of a size that is efficient for administration purposes but also offers local communities a sense of affinity and ownership of issues

• Number of SMRs to be somewhere between 5 and 10, with 12 as the absolute maximum; recognition that there would be a trade-off between the drivers of efficiency and affinity

• There was a significant level of support for SMR boundaries that might use a combination of the boundaries for Inshore Fisheries Groups and SEPA’s River Basin Catchment Management Plans’ Area Advisory Groups as their base; it was felt that these existing divisions give a ‘good fit’ for areas that encompass a terrestrial element along with a coastal and offshore focus, although the boundaries between the different elements was not agreed

• There was no strong push for SMRs to go out to 12nm, or even beyond 6nm: soft landward boundaries required to allow coastal communities to participate and encourage development of ICZM with terrestrial interests.

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1 It should be recognised that those existing groups as they are currently constituted would not be best placed to deliver marine planning but the areas they cover may be useful in setting out SMRs.

2 Solway, Clyde, Moray, Tay and Forth
In summary, this workshop event, and the preparation asked of participants, was successful in gathering a wide range of opinions in a short period of time. It was a useful starting point for work to consider Scottish Marine Regions but it should be supplemented with longer term, more sustained dialogue with key interests on an individual basis or in small groups, perhaps with a common geographic/area focus.

A further paper on potential recommendations and options for Scottish Marine Regions is being prepared. The SCF and the Scottish Government are working together to use the points raised in this workshop as base material for developing suggestions on how Scottish Marine Regions might be defined.

Annexe B

Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

NEPHROPS FUNCTIONAL UNITS

I write to provide further information on Nephrops Functional Units, fishing patterns and the difficulties inherent in managing the North Sea and West of Scotland Nephrops stock on a Functional Unit basis. This issue was raised during my Committee appearance on 11 November 2009.

The Committee will be aware that, for some time, scientific advice from ICES has been to manage the Nephrops stock at a Functional Unit (FUs) level in order to preserve the sustainability of the stock. The distribution of Nephrops is not uniform and is limited to muddy habitat. The distribution of suitable sediment therefore defines the species distribution. These areas of muddy sediment have been defined as Functional Units and are likely to represent distinct stocks with no exchange of individuals between them. In contrast, the current management of Nephrops, both in terms of TAC and effort, is determined at the ICES sub-area level (i.e. North Sea and West of Scotland).

The particular problem created by this incompatibility between FUs and management at ICES sub-area level, which I flagged up to the Committee, is that vessels are free to move between fishing grounds within each ICES sub-area. This makes it difficult to control effort levels in each of the FUs. Effort therefore has the potential to increase in an uncontrolled way in one or more FUs. As population trends differ from one FU to another, there is a risk that local effort and harvest rates may be too high. This could potentially lead to stock depletion at the FU level even if, at the same time, the Total Allowable Catch for the entire ICES sub-area has not been exceeded or, indeed, has even been undershot.

While it would be desirable to move to system of managing Nephrops on the basis of FUs rather than ICES sub-areas, in order to avoid this problem, there are a number of practical difficulties in doing so. Firstly, quotas are allocated to POs on the basis of FQAs (fixed quota allocation units). FQAs were originally issued free of charge in 1999 but have become tradable commodities with a financial value attached. FQAs for Nephrops cover the North Sea or the West of Scotland.
Moving to FU management would require re-calculation and re-distribution of FQAs. Some of the fishing industry are concerned that, if we were to re-allocate FQAs, we would lose the flexibility of the current system with the possibility that some vessels might find themselves restricted to FUs with less FQAs than others.

A second difficulty relates to controls within the *Nephrops* fishery. Controls could become more difficult in part because some of the FUs are relatively close together. Indeed, some FUs are physically connected to one another, with vessels moving between FUs during one fishing trip. Furthermore, some vessels in the *Nephrops* fishery are rather small and, as a result, are not obliged to use VMS.

The Scottish Government is aware of the difficulties inherent to managing *Nephrops* fisheries on a FU basis, but will continue to engage with the industry to consider alternative ways to ensure the sustainability of one of Scotland’s most valuable stocks.

I hope you find this information reassuring.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD  
CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
2 December 2009

Annexe C

Correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL: 20 NOVEMBER 2009

I am writing to provide you with a short report on the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting which I attended in Brussels on 20 November. The report is attached.

I am copying this letter to Irene Oldfather MSP, Convener of the European and External Relations Committee, for information.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD  
CABINET SECRETARY FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
26 November 2009
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL: 20 NOVEMBER 2009

Agriculture
Several agriculture items were postponed from this Council meeting until the next, because of the extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 19 November.

The Council approved a request from Poland for permission to pay a nationally-funded state aid to assist with restructuring the farm sector. A number of Member States abstained in the vote, including the UK. The Council failed to reach a qualified majority either for or against a Commission proposal to authorise the import (but not cultivation) of a genetically-modified maize variety, MIR604. Under the procedural rules, the Commission can now decide whether to grant the authorisation.

Among the Any Other Business points, Hungary made a request to amend the rules on electronic identification of sheep. The UK intervened, at the request of the Scottish Government, and called for the regulation to be reviewed at the earliest opportunity. In the absence of the responsible Commissioner, Mrs Vassiliou, Commissioner Borg took note of these requests on behalf of the Commission.

Fisheries
On the fisheries items, the main item for discussion was a proposal for a Technical Conservation Regulation but, in the face of opposition from Member States, the Commission withdrew its proposal. Instead, the Council reached political agreement (with the UK and Ireland voting against) on an interim compromise for 18 months of the current annual provisions governing mesh sizes, gear types and catch composition. An absence of any decision would have left a legal gap on technical measures from 1 January 2010.

The UK and Ireland worked very hard in bilaterals with the Presidency and the Commission to find an acceptable solution that would avoid the continuation of the restrictions to the West of Scotland, which had only been agreed as an emergency measure for one year. However, regrettably the Commission and Presidency were not able to accept UK and Irish requests.

The continuation of the status quo will cause difficulty to part of the Scottish whitefish fleet operating in the West of Scotland. However, the failure to adopt the new Technical Conservation Regulation has the merit of having prevented the adoption of new unacceptable measures which would have affected the Nephrops fleet.

Other fisheries items included an update from the Commission on the progress of the annual fisheries negotiations with Norway. The Commission also gave a statement on Community action reducing incidental catches of seabirds in which it said that a data collection programme would be launched in spring 2010. The UK called for the Commission to publish a formal Action Plan to allow full consultation with stakeholders and the European Parliament. The Council was able to agree on new fishing quotas for the stocks in the Black Sea for 2010.
The next Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting is on 14-16 December in Brussels.