



MINISTÈRE
DE L'AGRICULTURE
ET DE L'ALIMENTATION

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FRANCE22
FRENCH PRESIDENCY
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION

PRESS KIT

Informal Meeting of Agriculture Ministers

Strengthening agricultural
and forestry models
for the good of the climate:
Low carbon agriculture

Strasbourg, 7-8 February 2022

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The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union

What does the Presidency of the Council of the European Union involve?

→ A rotating Presidency

Each Member State holds the presidency of the Council of the European Union for six months on a rotational basis. **France will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU from 1 January to 30 June 2022.** The Presidency of the Council organizes meetings, brokers compromises, submits conclusions and ensures the coherency and continuity of the decision-making process. It ensures good cooperation between all Member States and acts as a liaison between the Council and the European institutions, in particular the Commission and European Parliament.

Consulter le site de la Présidence française du Conseil de l'Union européenne : www.europe2022.fr

What is the Council of the European Union?

The Council of the European Union, also called the Council of Ministers, or simply the Council, brings together the ministers of the EU Member States who meet in configurations by sector of activity. It serves as the co-legislator of the European Union, along with the European Parliament.

Concretely, ministers will chair ten sectors or configurations of the Council of the EU: general affairs; economic and financial affairs; justice and home affairs; employment, social policy, health and consumer protection policy; competitiveness (internal market, industry, research and space); transport, telecommunications and energy; agriculture and fisheries; environment; education, youth, culture and sport; trade.

Exceptionally, the Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Mr Josep Borrell

The Council also has budgetary powers; it adopts and amends the European budget with the Parliament. Lastly, the Council adopts certain decisions as well as non-binding recommendations, concludes international agreements on behalf of the EU, and appoints members of certain institutions such as the European Court of Auditors, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions. The Council's deliberations and votes on legislative texts are public.

What is the framework for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union?

The PFUE follows the main policy lines that President Macron set out in his speech for a sovereign, united and democratic Europe on 26 September 2017 at the Sorbonne. For the past four years, President Macron and the Government have been working to build a genuine European sovereignty, meaning Europe's ability to exist in the world to defend our values and interests. The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union will continue this work for a more inclusive, sovereign and democratic Europe.

The PFUE meets citizens' expectations, which were expressed in the citizen debates held in September in 18 French regions as part of the Conference on the Future of Europe. This project, proposed by France in 2019, established a new forum for debate with European citizens. The final contribution of these national panels was submitted to the Government in the autumn. Recommendations made by citizens, in France and in Europe, have helped determine the priorities of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The PFUE coordinates within the trio presidency programme, with which France aligns its action. This system, which has existed since 2009, sets long-term goals and defines the main topics to be addressed over a period of 18 months. After the Slovenian Presidency, France will begin a new cycle and will work as a trio with the Czech Republic in the second half of 2022 and Sweden in the first half of 2023.

Nearly 400 events

A total of nearly 400 events planned in France and the EU will punctuate the Presidency: political meetings, a cultural programme and citizen events open to everyone.

Find all information about the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the Presidency's official website and social media:

- Facebook • Instagram • LinkedIn • Twitter • Youtube • Flickr
- Website: www.europe2022.fr

Also, in order to make sure the French Presidency reaches citizens, the events will be held throughout the national territory and abroad. Find out more about these different meetings organized by actors from a wide range of backgrounds.

The Council of the European Union should not be confused with:

- The European Council, which brings together Heads of State and Government of Member States and defines the overall political direction and priorities of the European Union. Its current President is Charles Michel.
- The Council of Europe, which is an intergovernmental organization made up of 47 Member States. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe promotes human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its seat is in Strasbourg and its Secretary-General is Marija Pejčinović Burić.

For more information:

- website: www.touteurope.eu
- website: www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/council-eu/

Strengthening agricultural and forestry models for the good of the climate

→ Low carbon agriculture

The EU has taken on an ambitious target: achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and thus meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. Carbon neutrality is defined as the capacity to offset as much carbon as we emit, while taking account of all the greenhouse gases that are responsible for climate change. Two levers of action will make this possible: reducing greenhouse gas emissions on one hand, and on the other hand, increasing the number of carbon sinks for carbon sequestration to offset unavoidable emissions. With this goal, in July 2021 the European Commission published the “Fit for 55” legislative proposal, which raises the EU’s ambitions with the objective to reduce net carbon emissions by at least 55% by 2030 in comparison to 1990.

→ The particular role of the agriculture and forestry sector in tackling climate change

This legislative proposal assigns the agriculture and forestry sectors ambitious goals for reducing their emissions, while recognising their unique role in land-based activities due to the carbon storage properties of soil and biomass.

This major issue of agriculture and forestry’s role in mitigating climate change has already been the subject of work at European level in the Council and the Commission. In its recent communication of 15 December 2021 on sustainable carbon cycles, the Commission presents concrete actions to make progress on the matter. It proposes developing a new green economic model based on low-carbon agriculture, namely reflected in the implementation of a certification framework based on carbon sequestration.

→ Towards agricultural systems that produce solutions

The climate urgency now necessitates strengthening eco-friendly agricultural models. The concept of low-carbon agriculture, based on initiatives already in place, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage in soil through responsible farming practices (management of cattle and run-off, management of cropland [in particular nitrogenous fertilisation], hedges, preservation of permanent grasslands and wetlands, etc.).

This transition of farming systems requires support beyond public financing through increased private funding, in particular in the context of voluntary carbon offsetting, which allow buyers of carbon credits to contribute to funding the low-carbon transition in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

As president of the Agriculture configuration of the Council of the European Union, Julien Denormandie, the French Minister of Agriculture and Food, has chosen to dedicate an informal ministerial meeting to this topic of the future, which will take place on 8 February in Strasbourg. European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, the the President of the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee, Norbert Lins and representatives of the European organisations concerned will also share their views with the Council on the topic of low-carbon agriculture.

The aim of this meeting is to make shared progress on these matters to ensure the future European framework meets the challenges facing the forestry and agriculture sectors in order to fully participate in mitigating climate change. It will be an opportunity for the Member States to share their experience and in particular for Minister of Agriculture and Food, Julien Denormandie to present the concrete initiatives already in place in France, such as the low-carbon label, which allows farmers to commit to lowering emissions on their farms over five years for market-based compensation.

PROGRAMME

Monday, 7 February 2022

10 a.m. Winemaking innovations tours held by INRAE, the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (Haut-Rhin)
> No Press

11:50 a.m. INRAE (Haut-Rhin)
> Exchanges between the ministers and the press

12:10 p.m. Presentation of the low-carbon label and Q&A with the French Livestock Institute (Idele) and France Carbone Agri
> Open to the press

2:50 p.m. Winemaking innovations tours held by INRAE (Haut-Rhin)
> For journalists

3:40 p.m. Tour of a farm (Bas-Rhin). The French experience of the low-carbon label: illustration at farm level and exchanges with the farm operator

4:10 p.m. Tour of a farm (Bas-Rhin)
> Exchanges between the ministers and the press

Tuesday, 8 February 2022

8 a.m. Welcome of the delegations by Julien Denormandie, the French Minister of Agriculture and Food - Arrival doorstep
Round table Palais de la Musique et des Congrès – Strasbourg
> Host broadcaster + all accredited press – event streamed on social media for journalists attending remotely

9 a.m. Informal Meeting of the ministers responsible for agriculture
Palais de la Musique et des Congrès – Strasbourg
> No Press

10:30 a.m. Family photo
> Host broadcaster + visual media

12:30 p.m. Joint press conference with Minister of Agriculture and Food, Julien Denormandie, and European Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski
Palais de la Musique et des Congrès – Strasbourg
> Host broadcaster + all accredited press - streamed via Zoom for journalists attending remotely

PARTICIPANTS

- **The 27 ministers from the Member States of the European Union**
- **Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI**,
commissioner for Agriculture,
- **Norbert LINS**,
chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
of the European Parliament,
- **Christiane LAMBERT**,
president of COPA
(the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations in the European Union),
- **Ramon ARMENGOL**,
president of COGECA
(the General Confederation of Agricultural Co-operatives in the European Union),
- **Diana LENZI**,
president of CEJA
(the European Council of Young Farmers).

STRASBOURG, HOST CITY

Grande Île, Strasbourg, has been on the World Heritage list since 1988, as the first urban centre to have been selected by UNESCO. The capital of Alsace has indeed managed to preserve its exceptionally diverse heritage, tracing the city's evolution from the Roman era to the present day. The Gothic Strasbourg Cathedral, with its 142 m spire, was the tallest in Christendom up until the 19th century. Its unusual alleys and timber-framed houses give this pleasant city its present-day uniqueness, especially during the legendary Christmas markets.

Many international organisations and European institutions have their seats in Strasbourg, such as the European Parliament, Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights.

Visit Strasbourg here: www.visitstrasbourg.fr



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