Priorities of the Environment Council (ENV) – Press Note

The Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change Dr Jose Herrera has today presented Malta’s Presidency priorities at the Council of the European Union on environment in Brussels. Dr Herrera said that Malta would like to focus on initiatives that will promote a competitive, resource-efficient and low-carbon economy within the framework of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

In the area of climate change, the Maltese Presidency will continue to build on the momentum achieved by the Paris Agreement, and will focus on the UNFCCC negotiations following the recent COP22 in Marrakech.

The Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union will also seek to make concrete and substantial progress on the revision of the Emissions Trading Scheme as well as advance discussions on the Commission Proposals for sectors not covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme: namely, the Effort Sharing Regulation and the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation.

Dr Herrera said that Malta together with its counterparts will also give due attention to the EU’s follow-up on emissions from aviation, following the International Civil Aviation Organisation General Assembly and will further advance the Circular Economy agenda by making substantial progress in negotiating proposals to amend six Waste Directives.

Additionally, the Maltese Presidency plans on progressing on a number of other open as well as new files, including the amendment to the scope of the Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive, the recast of the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulation, the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives, and the Environmental Implementation Review.

Dr Herrera also announced that Malta will be hosting a Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial Meeting in April, where we hope to see the adoption of a Water Strategy for the Mediterranean in Valletta along with an Informal Ministerial Meeting in April, during which we aim to develop a high level discussion on how we address climate change adaptation; how ocean governance and environmental policy interact; and how environmental issues such as marine litter can help to address and shape economic policy and economic output such as the development of a new plastic strategy in the wider context of the circular economy. Our challenge is therefore to act and take concrete steps to delivering truly sustainable growth ensuring that economic development does not come at the cost of our natural environment upon which our economies rely.

The Minister for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change thanked the Slovak Presidency for their hard work and collaboration with Malta as the incoming Presidency.