

Brussels,

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group “Arable Crops – COP and Seeds”

01/03/2019

Chair: **Mr Max SCHULMAN (COGECA)**

Organisations present: All organisations were present, except Beelife, Birdlife, EBB, EFFAT, ELO, Fertilizers, Pan Europe and SACAR.

1. Approval of the agenda (and of the minutes of previous meeting¹)

The minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda were approved.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

Morning session: COP

DG AGRI presentation of study on the “Market developments and policy option evaluation aspects of the plant protein sector in the EU”

The Commission presented the conclusions of the external study on market developments in EU plant proteins which had been carried out by Agrosynergies.

FEDIOL commented on the methodology of the study which was based on “protein-rich plant” (PRP) with a crude protein content higher than 15%. The scope of the study failed to include the role that rapeseed meal played in the feed sector. The study focussed on the food market which was a niche.

FEFAC supported FEDIOL and commented on the role that industry played in promoting sustainability in soya production. FEFAC added that a definition of “GM-free” at European level was necessary. Research and innovation were of major importance in this sector for animal nutrition and the quality of the protein was key.

COPA commented on the decrease in oilseed area in several Member States, the dependency on soya meal imports, the lack of EU support for producing non-GM soya and the need to have access to improved varieties of protein crops. CEJA supported this. COPA added that cereals also played a role but that farmers were not remunerated for protein content. There should be greater consistency between various policies, such as renewable energy.

¹ If not adopted by written procedure (CIRCABC)

STARARCH EUROPE regretted that starch industry by-products, such as dried distillers' grains with solubles (DDGS), were not covered by the study.

The Commission responded that the protein balance sheet covered most of the protein sources for feed and would be updated for 2017/18. The support that would be granted to plant protein would depend on the national CAP strategic plans. While the feed market was the most important, the food market was growing and the study provided information.

ESA called on the Commission to facilitate the use of new technologies in the EU.

FDE asked a question about whether hemp fell within the scope of the study. The Commission responded that it was covered under other oilseeds.

EEB reminded the participants that grassland was the largest source of protein for feeding ruminants and asked for an EU protein strategy based on figures/data of GHG emission savings from agriculture (substitution of mineral fertilisers, fewer soya meal imports).

VIA CAMPESINA defended a food transition with more vegetable proteins and more support for pastoralism.

DG AGRI responded to the stakeholders' comments and underlined the proposals on Horizon 2020, price notification for oilseeds and protein crops, which was optional for the Member States, and the promotion policy.

Market situation – exchange of views on the cereal, oilseed and protein crop market situation

The Commission presented the updated data for the MY 18/19 and an initial forecast for 19/20 based on usual trends.

COCERAL had not yet updated its figures for MY 18/19. COCERAL commented on the Commission's 18/19 balance sheet. The Commission had taken the figure for maize for Romania that the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture had provided. COCERAL forecasted EU maize production to be at 61 million tonnes, lower than the Commission. COCERAL seemed to be more optimistic about wheat and barley exports. COCERAL was less optimistic about rapeseed imports.

COPA did not have an estimated figure for MY 19/20 as it was too early. The rapeseed area in France and Germany was lower than usual due to the drought last autumn. COCERAL predicted an increase in rapeseed imports.

CEPM forecasted an additional 200,000 hectares for maize for MY 2019/20.

FDE mentioned the decrease of durum wheat production and the minor role of the new Italian legislation on the indication of raw material origin.

COPA complained about the low farm gate prices and the costs of fertilising products (price-cost squeeze). COPA called for transparency on the fertiliser market and competition between the EU fertiliser manufacturers to be increased. COPA reiterated the role of basic income sustainability support (BISS) and the risk management tool box for farm incomes. COPA commented on the unfair competition of maize imports which were deflating all cereal prices.

FEDIOL asked if High Oleic Sunflower Seed could be separated in the statistics (by giving it, for example, a separate CAS number, in a similar way as High Erucic Rapeseed has a different CAS number). This would help the transparency of the market as High Oleic Sunflower Seed has now an important part of the Sunflower Seed market with widely varying premiums.

Presentation of the Commission Communication “Towards a stronger international role of the euro”

The Commission presented the Communication and invited the stakeholders to respond by 22/03/2019.

COCERAL asked the Commission to develop a system of export credits like the U.S. The Commission responded that such an answer falls clearly under the consultation on the role of the euro although it would also be relevant under the parallel consultation on financial instruments.

Brexit preparation

The Commission informed the participants about the outcome of the stakeholders meeting held on 1st February and about a specific webpage on DG AGRI web.

Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) study: an analysis of EU policy consultation

The presentation was circulated via CIRCA. The Commission indicated that a study on CDGs and their effectiveness would be carried out, and presented the content and the methodology. An online consultation would be launched and a report would be available in 2019.

The stakeholders underlined the important role of the CDG and called for more dialogue. They asked for civil servants in charge of the files to participate more in meetings and for a good timely preparation of the agenda, topics and reports. The division of the competences between the Commission services sometimes made dialogue more difficult. COPA representatives highlighted that they were an intermediary between the Commission and the local farmers.

Contaminants: possible maximum residue levels for ergot and ergot alkaloids

The Commission presented the state of play of its work with the stakeholder consultation and the Member States, and made a presentation available via CIRCA.

COCERAL commented on the sampling and the lack of reliable and rapid laboratory detection methods.

COGECA underlined the role of good agricultural practices and the guideline documents from Germany. COPA complained that European farmers were lacking tools that remained available to their competitors.

ESA underlined the role that new technologies played in accelerating the breeding of tolerant varieties.

Afternoon session: seeds

Market situation

On the topic of the derogation, COPA asked the Commission to verify the requests of the Member States in detail and check the availability of seeds on the market before granting derogations which should only be granted on an exceptional basis. The high quality of seeds should be guaranteed. Farmers in the north of Sweden were happy with the derogation.

Organic farming regulation

The Commission informed the group about the process to elaborate the secondary legislation and the schedule. The presentation was made available via CIRCA.

VIA CAMPESINA questioned the legal protection of heterogeneous material which was not a variety and thus not covered by the CPVO. The Commission answered that it did not know the reproductive material that was described by VIA CAMPESINA.

IFOAM and PAN EUROPE demanded that organic farmers have access to a large number of organic varieties.

Invalidation of rule 28(2) in EPO guidelines for examination

The Commission explained the options/ways forward to follow up the invalidation of rule 28(2) and circulated its presentation via CIRCA. The modifications of the EPO rules were not in the hands of the Commission.

COPA asked to change the EPO rules.

VIA CAMPESINA asked the Commission to do more to avoid patent on seeds.

The Commission commented on the procedure of the disclaimer which had applied for a short period in 2017-18 at the time of the EPO rule 28(2).

The ECJ ruling on new mutagenesis techniques: stakeholders' views

COPA and CEJA underlined the need to have access to improved varieties and the benefits that new technologies could bring to farmers and society as a whole.

COCERAL said that the current legislation was not applicable.

VIA CAMPESINA stated that mutagenesis and patents on seeds went hand in hand.

Traceability and segmentation of the mutagenesis products were key as consumers wanted to make an informed choice. If a patent was applicable, of course traceability and segmentation would apply.

The Commission reminded the group that the ECJ ruling clarified that the new mutagenesis techniques are within the scope of the current GM legislation. No new legislative work is planned under the current College of Commissioners.

Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

No conclusions.

4. Next steps

No next steps decided.

5. Next meeting

25/10/2019

6. List of participants – Annex

Disclaimer "The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."

List of participants– Minutes
Civil Dialogue Group “Arable Crops – COP & Seeds”
 Date: 1st March 2019

ORGANISATION	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	VIDAL	Céline
EuropaBio	MERTENS	Andrea
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	KOFOED	Thor Gunnar
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	SEEDLER	Guido
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	ISAMBERT	Jean-Francois
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	SCHULMAN	Max
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	SILVA	Pablo
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	KASTLER	Guy
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	BROUWER	Roelofina
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	PASTRANA GARCIA	Gonzalo
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	SKODA	Vitezslav
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	RACAPE	Joseph
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	SLABE	Anamarija
European farmers (COPA)	JÍROVEC	Ludvík
European farmers (COPA)	GALLARDO BARRENA	Pedro Ignacio
European farmers (COPA)	PALHA	José
European farmers (COPA)	PICONCELLI	Silvia
European farmers (COPA)	DEJONCKHEERE	Dominique
European farmers (COPA)	SOLARSKI	Tadeusz

European farmers (COPA)	ERNOUX	Etienne
European farmers (COPA)	OLÁH	Endre
European farmers (COPA)	BROWNE	Mark
European farmers (COPA)	NILSSON	Lennart
European farmers (COPA)	HAMBLY	Michael
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	AXIOTIADES	Ilana
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	DEHOUST	Jakob
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	SOMMER	Andreas
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	AXIOTIADES	Iliana
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	DEWAR	Flora
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	MITKO	Philippe
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	ZULUAGA ZILBERMANN	Marta
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	KRUSE	Daniel
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	ROMANESE	Lorenza
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	LANGAT	Catherine
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	REVERDY	Laurent
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	VANMARCKE	Geert
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	PICARRA	Jaime
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	PIANU	Piero luigi
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	JACQUES	Juliette
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	DE LA VEGA	Nicolas
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	THOERING	Alexandra