

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON FORESTRY AND CORK ON 17th DECEMBER 2014

1. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the AG on Forestry and cork of 27 May 2014 and of the agenda of the day

The Commission welcomed the members of the CDG on Forestry and cork to the first meeting of the group. The Commission mentioned that the group composition did not change a lot but that there are some new organisations.

The Commission asked the members to approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Advisory Group and the agenda of the meeting.

2. Election of chairperson and vice-chairpersons (led by the Commission)

The Commission presented the procedure for the election according to Article 5 of the Commission decision on the CDG -

<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:338:0115:0117:en:PDF>).

The candidate for the chair and vice-chair post presented themselves. Mr Juha Hakkarainen (Copa and Cogeca) candidate for the chair post and Mr Bernard de Galember (CEPI) for the vice-chair. The two candidates stated that working together also with the NGOs, for which the candidate was not accepted due to the deadline, is considered as crucial.

The two candidates were supported by the majority of the members. Mr Juha Hakkarainen was elected as chairperson of the group and Mr Bernard de Galember as vice-chair.

3. Presentation of the new system of the CDGs by the Commission

The Commission mentioned the three reasons why they had to change the system. First the EP and MEPs asked the Commission to have a balance approach as regards the economic and non-economic operators in the groups. Second, more transparency was asked from journalists and NGOs. The Ombudsman received also complained on this issue. Third, the AG system had to be adapted to the reformed CAP and the new structure of the Commission. Based on the call for interest the Commission has received 103 applications which have been analysed by 13 panels based on objective criteria. The Director General of DG Agri decided on the composition of the 13 civil dialogue groups on the 18 July 2014.

The Commission stated that as 2014 is the first year for the new system, adjustments of the system will be possible if needed.

Concerning the strategic agenda, this needs to cover topics for the next 7 years that reflect well the subjects that are relevant for the group and enable in depth discussions on specific topics. The chair is responsible to prepare it.

As regards the rules of procedures (rop), they are still in draft and they are not strict. It is up to the chairmanship how they would like to work and what they want to include in the ROP. The Commission will have a scrutiny of the Ombudsman and any suggestions for improvement from the group are welcomed.

Concerning the second vice-chair post, the Commission mentioned that elections will be organized next year and that the Commission decision needs to be respected.

QUESTIONS:

CEPI requested the Commission more information about the list of criteria used for the selection of the members of the group and about the composition of the panel who selected the members. They have asked also why the focus should be on 7 years for the strategic agenda. They have requested for the possibility to have ad-hoc changes.

Birdlife asked about the election: on which bases it is decided who is accepted, what is happening when there is no majority. Regarding the ROP, they have asked what is the deadline to send comments and that is important for the working groups to have a balance representativeness in the group.

FERN supported the points made by CEPI and Birdlife and asked how the agenda will be prepared, how the points to be included in the agenda will be scrutinized and on which bases the consensus will be achieved. They also stated that is important to have a strong link with the SFC.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The candidacies for the chairmanship needs to be approved therefore it is important to set a deadline that is mentioned in the invitation to propose candidates. In the Commission decision it is stipulated that in case no majority is reached, there is a second round with simple majority.

As regards the strategic agenda, the approach can be changed if is not appropriate for future presidency. After the strategic agenda is prepared this will be published on CIRCA and the members have 15 days to send comments. The Commission stated that the involvement of the members is important.

As regards rules of procedures, the comments should be sent to the chair and then will be sent to the Commission. The Commission asked the members to read the decision and the rules and to send them their comments.

On the representation, this depends on the organisations that have applied within the deadline

The unit H4 stated that they count on the support of the group and that they look forward to work with them.

Regarding the SFC, the Commission mentioned that the CDG provides inputs to the Commission and not to SFC.

Chairman mentioned that good cooperation between various organisations is possible and changes of the strategic agenda on ad-hoc basis should be possible.

QUESTIONS:

Birdlife stated that is crucial for Commission to create a strong link between the SFC and stakeholders. The dialogue between the CDG and CDG is very important.

The chair stated that the active contribution of the all organisation and their involvement in the work of the group is crucial.

CEPI asked why the relation with SFC has been broken because it is very important the cross-work. They have asked also how it will work with resolutions as in the past we did a good work concluding unanimously on specific message.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The intention of the Commission is to establish close working conditions between the CDG and SFC.

It was highlighted that it is very imp to continue the collaboration.

The Commission stated also that they think that the CDG play an important role in the implementation of the EU forest strategy.

QUESTIONS:

Birdlife asked for the deadline for the ROP.

CEPI asked why the rules changed as regards the access to documents related to the work of the group.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

There is no deadline for the ROP.

As regards the access to CIRCA it was decided to have an uniform system so the access to CIRCA is based on the information received during the call. The information is sent to the contact persons for the specific CDG. The Commission needs a reference person identified in each organisation and that persons is sending to its experts.

QUESTIONS:

FERN asked why we do not have one document for rules of procedures and the decision.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The Commission answered that each group can decide how to deal with the ROP. The Commission decision is the legal basis.

Is up to each group how to handle all the documents, how to proceed with the draft agenda and how to involve the group.

The Chair concluded that it is important to continue the collaboration with all stakeholders groups and work on ad-hoc basis.

4. Tour de table for the introduction of members and brainstorming on the strategic agenda for the group

The chair asked each organisation to make a short presentation and to mention the points for the strategic agenda.

CEPF, the voice of the forest owners made a short presentation of its members, that they represent 20 countries and 24 members. CEPF was a member of the previous of AG and

even if they have less seats they stated that they will constructively contribute to the work of the group.

They stressed that timely meetings in order to secure proper contribution is crucial. Furthermore, a strong linkage with other expert group such as FBI and SFC is highly needed, we need to facilitate dialogue. As regards the strategic agenda this should cover the major topics such as climate change, rural development, biodiversity relevant initiative, Natura 2000, use of wood etc.

Birdlife they are global network for birds and their protection. They stated that they consider that a good implementation of the decision taken at EU it is important as well as a balance implementation of CAP, EU forest and biodiversity strategy, climate decision, Natura 2000 and how should work for us. For more details on the strategic agenda they will need to consult their members.

WWF(World Wide Fund) has the same position of Birdlife.

Woodworking industries stated that the dialogue between all Commission services is important as well we other stakeholders. Streamlining and simplifying the regulation at EU level should be a priority. The most important topic for the whole sector is wood mobilisation and the real potential of forest for all of us.

EEB, a network of environmental organisation working in all EU member states and having 140 members (representing 15 million members),it is focused on conservation and biodiversity in EU and at national level. They have specified that how we use the wood resources is important and that we need to ensure efficient use of resources for the transition to a more green economy.

FERN, forest and human rights, they focus on EU policy – SFM, biodiversity loss and implementation of the EU forest strategy are key issues that they are interested on.

CEJA founded in 1958 represents 2 million of young farmers, 24 Member states and 32 Organisations Family farms also with forest; access to land, generation renewal, financial instruments in time, invest and competitive in forest and farms, the implementation of the new RDP for 2014-2020 are crucial topics that they would like to be addressed by the group.

Eustafor (public forest owners), representing 30% of forested area, they used to be members in the former AG and they are happy to continue. For the strategic agenda, the implementation of EU forest strategy is very important – SFM key issue as well as policy development on environmental aspects have to be addressed by the group.

CEPI representing the pulp and paper industry, is an important player at world level using 90% of the raw materials from Europe. They consider that an overarching element is competitiveness of the forestry sector as well as the bio-based industry contribution to this discussion, availability of raw materials and SFM it is considered as critical. Implementation of the forest strategy, SFM criteria and CCA are points that need to be part of the agenda.

Improving the communication and perception of the sector, the EU timber regulation revision are also points that need to be addressed.

ELO representing the interest of landowners (54 members in 25 MSs) stated that multifunctional approach for the forest sector should be the starting point for the discussion: good market for wood and wood products, secure jobs and employment in forest sector, active forest owners as well long term investments, ensure about the property rights to decide on management of our forest, guarantee the SFM are just some of the important issues that they will like to be addressed by the group. They have also mentioned that flexibility is needed as regards the strategic agenda.

EURAF representing the agroforestry sector in 15 Member states, bridge the gap between the agriculture and forest sector; they are also focused on research and policy coordination. They consider that conflicts between pillar I and pillar II when we talk about forest needs to be discussed, e.g trees that growth also outside forest. Another important point are the benefits for environment and the agroforestry contribution that needs to be recognised.

ECVC represents 26 organisations in 25 EU countries. They consider that is important to make the link between agriculture and forestry, between animal breeding and forest. They also look at international view on agroforestry and they consider that global level impact is important to be analysed. Climate related issues at EU and world level and the impact on EU systems needs to be addressed.

FECOF (European Federation of Municipal Forest Owners) considers that important subjects to be addressed by the group are the implementation of the new CAP, Natura 2000, SFM criteria.

CEETTAR (European Organisation of agricultural, forestry and rural contractors) they provide services to forest owners, supply wood to industry and contribute to sustainability. For them it is important the safe of operators as the work in forest is dangerous, to respect the environment with good practices and to optimize the use of new technologies. They consider that the focus should be on rentability of forestry operations with multifunctional role of forest, education and to mobilize more woods on a sustainable way. They stated also that the image of the sector needs to improve as well as the coherence at EU policy level.

USSE works in S-E of Europe and represents 13 org and consider that is important for the sectors to have regular dialogue with the stakeholders.

UEF they represents 50000 professionals in 20 countries. For them the social aspects and the working conditions are important.

IFOAM - they represent 160000 organisations in all EU countries and also EFTA countries including SMEs, researchers etc and they look forward to collaborate with the members of the group.

ENFE (European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs) represents 8 national organisations and 10 thousands of forestry contractors. They consider that bioeconomy is a growing part of economy and that there are a lot of expectation from forest. They consider that the multipurpose use of forest is important to be taken into account. They have stressed that

competitiveness is a vital issue for the EU therefore skilfulness of contractors and work force, the promotion of improved skills, occupational safety, availability of work force need to be addressed as the harvesting volumes are growing as well as mechanization.

COPA – COGECA, the voice of European Farmers and agri-cooperatives, highlighted that is not easy to find a solution for all problems. A proactive approach is a solution to increase the contribution of forest to bioeconomy, to better adapt to climate change, to contribute to biodiversity that cannot be high without forest. Regarding the strategic agenda the successful implementation of the strategy is crucial with an active involvement of stakeholders, the implementation for the RD policy and the role of forest in the discussion on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Furthermore, the competitiveness of the sector, raising awareness on the importance of forest and their contribution to bioeconomy are also important topics that needs to tackled by the group.

The chair concluded that a draft of the strategic agenda will be prepared by the chairmanship and will be sent to the members of the group.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

5. Collaboration of the Civil Dialogue group on Forestry and cork with:

- The expert group on Forest-based industries (FB-I)

The Commission made a presentation that is available on CIRCABC. The Commission mentioned that the expert group in DG Entr is not a new group (exists since 30 years) but the group has a new life and format. They highlighted that is important to avoid overlaps and to find solution how to work together between the various expert groups. DG Agri stated that coordination and communication is one of the key priority of the EU strategy.

QUESTIONS:

ELO asked that the same criteria when we discuss about sustainability should be applied also to other sectors. They consider that forestry represents the most sustainable sector.

CEPF mentioned that is good that we discuss about growth but it is important to discuss in the relation with third countries; TTIP could have an important impact on biomass.

Relations with Asian countries are crucial as for example the exports to China are an issue presented in the press today.

Birdlife considers that increasing collaboration is very important therefore sharing the agendas of the different groups should be a priority to know on what we discuss.

Regarding the implementation it is important to indicate when consultation of the CDG and FB-I groups will be needed. They highlighted also that more practical ways how to collaborate in the future need to be found.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

As regards the trade issues it was highlighted in the FB-I meeting on the 21 November that maybe a subgroup on this will be created. DG Entr invites colleagues from DG Trade

in their meetings for update. The Commission highlighted that is important to ensure collaboration through the common members of the two groups.

As regards the collaboration, DG Entr considers that is premature to discuss when and how the two groups will collaborate. Agendas will be shared but each group should do its part.

On the SFM coherence will be ensured with DG Envi.

The chair and COPA asked for an observer seat for the CDG in the group in DG Entr.

The Commission answered that they will reflect on this and that the information need to be shared by the common members of the two groups.

The chair concluded by saying that better coordination and cooperation is crucial to find practical solution to the common points and the CDG is looking forward to collaborate with DG Entr expert group.

6. The implementation of the new EU Forest Strategy:

- State of play of the work of the Working Group on SFM criteria and next steps

The Commission provided a presentation that is available on CIRCABC. They have mentioned that the chair of the CDG is an observer in the group. They have stated also that the time table is quite ambitious because it is expected that the work of this group will contribute to the discussion on the 2030 package. The Commission specified also that a questionnaire will be send at the beginning of next year to the MS and the members of the group.

QUESTIONS:

Eustafor asked what the system to ensure and to demonstrate SFM should look like? The second question was on what the Commission foresees to do with the results of the questionnaire.

ELO asked about the timetable, if the deadline June 2015 could be changed, what progress has been made in the group and what are next steps. They have also stated that this it should not go at forest owner level as we have already national legislation and forest owners are confused. In addition, there is also the timber regulation that needs to be implemented.

Copa asked how the Commission will manage the questionnaire as they are expecting to get an answer on the same questions both from the MS and stakeholders.

CEPF specified that no management holding level is accepted . They have asked what about imports and how we can go back on the imports discussion that was abandoned.

EURAF asked what is the link with the existing certification systems such as PEFC.

CEETTAR asked what is the impact in the MS and how this will be implemented in the future

WWF stated there is no common forest policy but there is an agreement between the MS to implement the strategy. They asked about what kind of criteria we discuss: for products, for forest? What about Forest Europe?

COPA stated that we need to be realistic and to use the existing criteria and improve them.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

Regarding the questionnaire, the first part refers to the system in place: 9 presentations already made in the working group on SFM and we could see different approaches on SFM – national legislation, inventories;

The fourth part looks at best approaches: European legislation –e.g timber legislation , risk approached, private sector initiatives. This part will be discussed later.

Regarding the timetable, the report should be ready by June in order to give the time to the SFC to prepare an opinion. It is up to CDG how this will be follow up in the group.

The Commission considers that the same questionnaire should be sent to the MS and stakeholders represented in the working group as they have full information.

Import is a particular element and will be discussed next year (2015). It is quite challenging to impose SFM for ex in Brazil. This will be discussed on how to demonstrate.

Regarding PEFC, this will be addressed in the next meetings, the certification systems and the pro and cons of this instrument will be considered.

The Commission stated that the working group will produce a technical report and they are not think at any legislation. The expertise of the group is on forest and will work only on the SFM and not on industry.

The analyse of existing criteria will be completed when the Commission will have the answers from the 28 Mss.

Targets to measure indicators cannot apply at individual level.

QUESTIONS:

CEPF asked what about FMP at holding level and introduce further legislation. In addition, they asked what about forest Europe process – revision of the criteria.

WWF asked what will happen in case we do not get anything before June?

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The Commission answered that they use every element to get information but no additional legislation concerning FMP is foreseen in the context of the new Commissioner.

As regards the interlinkage with forest Europe, the Commission considers that the scope of their work is different than Forest Europe. The Commission focus is on EU level and

the demonstration is also addressed that is not cover by Forest Europe. Forest Europe has access to the documents;

It is crucial to achieve consensus on the report; if is not the case we will continue.

The chair concluded that the group supports the whole process of the forest strategy and the SFM; he highlighted that an urgent need for coordination from various policies impacting on forest is needed and the right place is under the forest strategy.

The CDG will discuss and will have their our own contribution for the SFM discussions.

- **Presentation and exchange of views on the Multi-annual implementation plan**

Commission made a presentation that is available on CIRCABC.

The plan is considered as a coordination mechanism but there is no budget linked to it.

The members of the group will be consulted by the end of January.

QUESTIONS:

Eustafor asked when the document will be available and if it is possible to see a preliminary version?

Copa mentioned that everything can be measured but we need to know how. They stated that a lot needs to be learned from the current situation and also from Kyoto protocol.

CEPF stated that they support such a plan but stakeholders are mentioned only once. Stakeholders should be considered as key partners. They have asked what is expected from stakeholders and until when? They have asked also what we do with the reports that are mentioned in the plan.

EEB mentioned that in the SFC it was promised to provide it to members of the group before the meeting in order to provide comments. They have asked when the opinion of the CDG will be asked.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The Commission said that they are working still on the plan and we will inform the group as soon as possible. They consider that the input from the CDG is crucial as they play an important role for sustainability and multifunctional.

As regards the outcome of the report the Commission asked what stakeholders want, legislation?

QUESTIONS:

FERN requested that enough time to be provided for contributions as it is quite difficult to coordinate all comments.

ELO considers that this will be a substantial part of the strategic agenda.

ANSWER - Commission mentioned that they took notes of the comments.

EEB stated that coordination is key for the members of the group.

The chair concluded that forest strategy is very important and that stakeholders are key partners and this needs to be taken into account.

The chair said to wait for the next version and the secretariat could draft a joint paper as we have to coordinate and cooperation. We ask the Commission to do this and the members of the CDG should do that also.

The chair stated that maybe in the next SFC we could have more seats for a delegation from the SFC.

7. Collaboration of the Civil Dialogue group on Forestry and cork with:

- Bioeconomy panel

The Commission made a short presentation on this point.

The background for the establishment of the panel is the bioeconomy strategy lead by research and innovation that was jointly supported Dg Agri, Envi, Mare and Entr.

The definition of the bioeconomy is included in the strategy and refers to the production and conversion of biomass into three main products food, feed and materials. This is not a single sector and is closely linked to the use of biomass and land. The bioeconomy provides the opportunity to realise the transition towards no fossil economy and also for jobs, growth, and contributes to reindustrialisation.

The panel was created in September 2013 and has 30 members nominated for an initial period of 2 years. Businesses, producers, policy makers, scientific community and civil society are part of the panel. FTP and Copa-Cogeca are members.

The Commission highlighted that is quite difficult to put bioeconomy in one room as is a highly complex system.

The role of the panel is to help the Commission to review progress on the implementation on bioeconomy strategy and to look at further actions.

The working methods of the group was in thematic working groups that they met twice per year – one group biomass supply and one on market making.

The panel agreed to issue two papers on these issues that were published in Turin with the document Where next on bioeconomy?. The document will be available on CIRCABC.

The Commission clearly stated that the reports are not the Commission reports.

Some points that were covered in the first report – 3 challenges: reduce GHG emissions, economic viable biomass for all operators, enough biomass without having a negative impact on environment. Sustainable biomass regions – negative and positive attractions, the Commission do not have an opinion on this yet.

In the report on market making – 5 different areas addressed: infrastructure, raw material, foster innovation, attractive investments, demand side measures. This report makes a link also with LMI recommendations.

The Commission informed the group that the next meeting of the Panel is in March 2015 and is up to the group what will happen next.

The chair stated that forestry is an important player in the bioeconomy.

CEPF mentioned that is difficult to follow all initiatives at EU level and they asked how the Commission is planning to coordinate this at EU level. Regarding the report on biomass, they stated that there were not happy with it and with the concept of biomass regions

CEPI stated that this is an area where EU can have the lead and that should be mainstreamed in the Commission in the future. The topic is relevant for this group CEPI proposed to invite the Commission expert dealing with the expert group on bio-based products in the next meeting.

Copa mentioned that we need to focus on concrete things, how to implement the strategy. An opportunity is the operational groups on EIP. They mentioned that is not easy to apply in practice.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The coordination is extremely difficult. It is already good that we have a strategy trying to put the bioeconomy in a coherent framework. The Commission has an interservice group and the scope is to improve the intensity.

The Commission stated that the leadership comes from research and the implementation and its success depends on various DGs.

As regards investments, the PPP on bio-based industries it is important as well as creating the regulatory conditions that they can further be developed.

The interaction with expert group on bio-based products is logic and normal.

Addition to the discussions we need to look at potential added value. The bioeconomy covers cover the whole value chains but will go much far than this.

In addition, bioeconomy already exists, therefore we need to enhance cross sector collaboration and to promote the use and reuse of biomass.

The chair concluded by stating that bioeconomy a big issue for the whole EU and an opportunity for the forest sector. He added that this point will be part of the agenda of the group also in the future.

SCAR (Standing Committee for Agriculture Research)

The Commission made a presentation on SCAR and the related activities with forestry and Bioeconomy that is available on CIRCA.

QUESTIONS:

EURAF mentioned that the Eranets as a mechanism that waste a lot of time when mapping the list of projects in the MS (the interface).

Copa stated that coordination is crucial and in the situation when there is lack of resources there is the need to find a methodology to achieve the coordination in order to make best use of available resources.

ANSWER FROM THE COMMISSION:

The re is on-going work on ensuring coordination between different ERA-NETNET actions l in the research agenda of MS, including an on-going questionnaire for prioritising/mainstreaming the bioeconomy-related ERANET Co-fund proposals for WP 2016-2017 of Horizon 2020 (including one on 'forest-based bioeconomy').

For an enhanced coordination and a more harmonised agenda on research and innovation at the MS level, there are also the JPI and Art 185 instruments, which will continue under Horizon 2020 as well.

The chair concluded this point by stating that we need to concentrate on future cooperation and coordination of all these initiatives.

AOB – The chair proposed that Sini Eräjää will be the ad hoc vice chair as he considered that her experience is important for the chairmanship. The group accepted the proposal.

The chair concluded that there are three points that need to be prepared by the chairmanship before the next meeting: the strategic agenda, the ROP and the contribution for the implementation plan of the forest strategy (deadline to be fixed by the Commission).

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