

Draft minutes of the Civil Dialogue Group on Common Agricultural Policy

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Matteo Bartolini.

1. Approval of agenda and minutes

The agenda and minutes of the last meeting on 4 March 2015 were approved.

The chair reminded the members of the procedure.

2. Election of the President and the Vice-President

The Commission (COM) presented the candidates for election and gave the floor to each candidate to present themselves.

Mr Silvano Ramadori (CEETAR) withdrew his candidature.

Participants were asked to raise their hand if they agreed with an open vote. They agreed.

Matteo Bartolini (CEJA) was reelected chairman, Faustine Defossez (EEB) and Niels Treschow (ELO) were elected vice-chairs.

Commented [kmr1]: Would be good to add the respective organisation in brackets.

3. Calendar of meetings for 2016

COM mentioned potential meeting in April and asked participants to let the COM know when they wanted the second meeting of 2016 – November/December.

COPA COGECA suggested that the time schedule of the CAP CDG meetings should be adapted to developments in the Commission's policy agenda such as the outcome of the consultation on greening

The Chair raised a point on the consultation on greening and that it was conducted only in English making it difficult for national farmers to take part, stating that a number of parties had asked him to raise this issue

COM replied that it understood in some cases the difficulties but also that it should be appreciated that if these were submitted in all national languages this would take months of translation and delay the process. COM said we should discuss it later on in more detail under the point on greening.

4. Exchange of views on simplification of the CAP

COM made a presentation on Simplification with a focus on greening

EEB asked for clarification on who will be sitting on expert groups on greening; about the collection of data from Member States on greening and whether it will be circulated among the group and made public in general; on REFIT (EFAs) EEB said that it was unfortunate that it is only looking at impact on production not on biodiversity

COM answered that expert groups have experts from Member States (MS) directly involved with the implementation of greening. COM also said it was not always easy for MS to get the necessary data

and to draw outcomes from it, especially in the time available. COM explained that it would be very difficult to assess environmental impact with the data from one year.

COPA-COGECA emphasized the point previously made about the language of the questionnaire and underlined that there was a lot of burden on farmers and paying agencies, mentioning a point on surface layer calculations. COPA-COGECA reiterated that the system should not be one which burdens the authorities and that greening should be sustainable and manageable.

FoodDrinkEurope highlighted the issue of European dependency on protein and asked COM how they could see the objectives of increased flexibility for farmers being achieved with simplification of EFAs measure

COPA-COGECA asked when changes in the guidelines can be expected and whether COM saw possibility to see developments to truly simplify applications for farmers and that this should be done for the next period already

COM reminded members that the objective of EFAs was not to introduce protein crops but to have biodiversity brought back in arable areas - leguminous crops were included at a later stage of the reform process but it still needs to fulfill that objective and that's why MS need to chose crops that improve biodiversity.

COM also highlighted that any additional eligibility criteria such as greening generate de facto additional unavoidable checks. COM stated that it may review parts of the delegated act next year. In terms of simpler aid applications, COM reiterated the need to consider practicalities for farmers and highlighted the creation of geo-spatial application and preventative preliminary checks – farmers may be notified of mistakes when they apply or within a limited period even after they apply and correct those mistakes without any penalty; it is possible to change a crop in a field in respect of greening even after the definitive submission of the aid application. ELO emphasized the need to not underestimate the success of greening and the disparity between MS in terms of how it is reported and how it is measured, mentioning a disincentive within the scheme to identify hedgerows and buffer strips because of potential payment delays leading to many farmers delivering far more than what is required.

COPA-COGECA reiterated need for simplification but expressed disappointment with confusion between evaluation of the performance of the measures and simplification. Simplification should not be merged with evaluation

The Chair reminded the members to keep their interventions as brief as possible.

CEETAR welcomed greening as very positive, and suggested giving 30 days to stakeholders to make suggestions on a number of areas where it is felt that simplification has had an effect, as well as another meeting to look at detailed issues more specifically.

CEJA asked who simplification is meant to be for – farmers or administrators – and reiterated that simplification is not working for many farmers, giving the example of share farming and farmers in partnership, where it is adding a lot of cost.

COPA COGECA reiterates problem with wording of the questionnaire, which is very technical and should be translated using practical language, adding that Annex 9 of the basic act could be broadened, because of nature of farming you cannot set dates as requested. Question about grazing considering it has been recognised to be good for the environment and enable cooperation between farmers.

BeeLife made a point that everything proposed relates to administration and it is important for the COM to bear in mind what the Court of Auditors has said about direction. Asked what tools COM has to monitor whether the objectives of greening are being met or not. In the meantime, we have made steps back.

COPA COGECA reiterated point on language of consultation because farmers are not able to respond and it is essential that they are consulted directly. Diversity of farming and different territories must be taken into account in terms of greening. If you also want simplification, take into account human factor – it is farmers who will have to make the changes. Suggested an approach which takes into account complexity of farming but also a different and positive approach where the farmer, environment, everyone benefits.

ELO commented that an area that could be streamlined and simplified is EFAs. You should clarify and simplify things by letting the farmer say just what is enough not anything in excess of those requirements.

COM recognizes concerns expressed and says they will see what is possible in terms of language for questionnaire, and that concerns have been heard and noted. COM reminded that greening was designed as a regime with a basic minimum to affect all farmers, but still potential for distortion. On equivalences, initially wanted an Annex validated by both EP and Council. COM stated that the differences between farmers are being recognized, as well as recognition for what is being done on farm, but reiterated difficulties here.

On EFAs, COM admitted emphasis on catch crops. MS have stretched lists but for greening these crops must have some meaning and impact on biodiversity. COM could perhaps review time factor, period they can be grown. Catch crops do not necessarily have immediate objectives.

COM is fully aware of the conditions of field margins and buffer strips. The difficulties of share farming and farming in partnerships has to be taken into account. COM explained that, as regards the timing of controls, Paying Agencies must make sure everything is controlled before payment. Catch crops are sown after the main crop and consequently lead to later controls and therefore influence the timeframe for payment. On the alleged over-declaration of EFAs, it is not mandatory to declare in excess and it is not mandatory to control more than necessary to establish compliance with the requirements of greening. To avoid problems in some cases, indeed the COM has advised that farmers could over-declare their EFAs on the farm but it is not specifically required to declare more. It was also noted that in general it is required to declare all the agricultural land of the whole farm.

5. Exchange of views on implementation of the CAP

COM made a presentation on “CAP Implementation - Direct Payments”

CEJA expressed disappointment on a non-mandatory stance on the young farmer issue (i.e. granting the 1st pillar aid to legal forms jointly controlled by young and non-young farmers will become optional for Member States as a result of the simplification exercise) considering the lack of generational renewal in the sector. Strong signal by MS using full 2% of budget for their young farmers. Advised MS to use tools in both pillars hand in hand.

CEETTAR called for greater involvement of all protagonists in these discussions and ensure we are able to respect a more equal agricultural system.

COM made a presentation on “The CAP towards 2020 – Implementation of Rural Development Policy”

COM made a presentation on PO/IPO

The Chair clarified change in agenda

COPA COGECA asked if COM will be doing any regular updates in terms of progress against the stated objectives, and whether modifications are required. COPA COGECA also asked for a similar analysis of PO/IPOs and comparison between MS on PO development

COPA COGECA asked if the 1.2% on knowledge transfer was the EIP and asked whether rural development is the right place to push for research and innovation. COPA COGECA also asked about procedure for changes to proposals. COPA COGECA explained that it welcomes better rules for PO/IPOs, importance for competition authorities

EEB expressed disappointment that there is no breakdown of measures behind the 51% share of budget dedicated to environment as much of this goes to ANCs. Also asked whether the fact sheets on COM website will be modified consequently after modifications by MS and for clarification on CMES

COM answered that need for comparison across MS on POs is very valid point and will be taken into account, and states that there is already some information on dairy POs and there is an obvious interest in that being broader. COM acknowledged need to ensure that there needs to be common understanding in terms of joint sales across Europe.

COM stated that the 1.2% for knowledge transfer is for training, demonstration and exchanges and not the EIP and that it had launched an open data platform where many figures, targets, achievements can be found, <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>. COM explained that there is no reason to think that these targets should be overly ambitious. A performance framework is in place which will check whether implementation is on track and when reviewing the implementation there will be a focus on what needs to be done to reach targets rather than simply adjusting targets downwards. 6 percent of the EAFRD envelopes is withheld and will be released when RDPs achieve certain milestone, so there is incentive there. Rural development does not fund alone-standing research, but it can fund the work of researchers in connection with innovation group work under the EIP. COM stated that rural development policy is the best tool at EU level for involving the

farming community in innovation. On modifications, COM stated that the partnership principle in rural development should be respected, stakeholders should be heard and modifications should go through the monitoring committee. On minimum spend on environment and climate, COM reminded members that even without ANC still above 30% minimum spending (34.7%).

Commented [F2]: You 100% sure of that ? I think it is close to 30% but not higher...

COPA COGECA asked what kind of data the amendment proposals are compared against and whether MS need to provide more updated data for this.

PAN Europe asked what the general principle will be in terms of the Water Directive and the Sustainable Use Directive, if they become part of cross compliance later on and how they may impact Rural Development Programmes

Commented [kmr3]: Does a "sustainable use directive" exist and are the Water Framework directive and it not already part of the cross compliance? **Please check with D2/D3**

FoodDrinkEurope asked whether it might be better to better interlink research and development funding in the EU.

COM stated that MS are reminded that updates are necessary according to developments when modifications to programmes submitted

COM underlined different nature of EIP as bringing the primary sector to the table and highlighted the new Juncker plan for investment funding as an interesting source of funding for agro-food projects. COM said that a variety of funding streams exist at EU level and suggested reading the overview of EU research and development funding sources available from the EIP-AGRI.

The Chair highlighted that 24 MS have adopted funds for young farmers, but 4 MS adopted a subprogramme.

COM explained that thematic subprogrammes were introduced in this programming period in order to target a need. No MS have gone for young farmers as a topic. Uptake in general of subprogrammes has been very low but now is the time to see how well they work.

The Chair pointed out that the subprogrammes included a lot of administrative burden for MS as additional RDPs

COM answered that this is something to be evaluated and if it is this which is putting MS off then needs to be improved. One of the reasons for choosing it is also higher support rates but for example for young farmers that is already available under the investment measure.

PAN Europe asked whether the percentage available to transfer between pillars also includes mutual funds

COM clarified the information on the slide is a full picture

FoodDrinkEurope asked for clarification on cooperation, globalizing, outsourcing

COM answered that it would like producers set up as POs to carry out activities together but POs can pull forces together to act in other areas, outsourcing of market activities or storage activities but that these cannot be main activities.

European Agroforestry Federation asked whether Commission had numbers of those who have already launched a call for operational groups.

COM answered that this information will be sent out to members when available.

EEB asked again about the Report for 2017 and whether it was different from the mid term CMEF and also on the percentage of land covered by AECMs, and a need to differentiate between light and dark green measures and whether there be any more information on that

For Rural Development, there will be Extended Annual Implementation Reports in 2017 and another in 2019 (giving a picture of programme implementation). The first mapping of the implementation of the CAP reform has also been commissioned and when we get this report we should also get aspects as to how this is happening in MS.

ELO stated that to expect a normal year this year in rural development take up was pretty farfetched.

PAN Europe asked whether selections of EIP operational groups are verified

COM clarified that they have to be innovative but the regulation do not define selection criteria and a study on the EIP has just been signed. Also informed members that a seminar is planned in first quarter of next year with first experience of operational groups.

WWF asked whether there are any MS which have not got to environmental goal of 30%?

COM answered that if a MS does not reach 30% then their programme will not be approved by COM

6. Exchange of views on 2015 events with relevant content for future policy developments

The Chair notified the members of a document made available by one of the participants.

The COM gave a presentation on "European agriculture; Today, tomorrow and beyond" and COM activities in EXPO Milan.

FoodDrinkEurope thanked the COM for the presentation and the events organised at EXPO, but complained that there was a lack of Commission representatives at their event. FoodDrinkEurope also invited all around the table to meet them and learn more about them.

FoodDrinkEurope stated that they participated in the Food and Feed event in June. There was some criticism of the EU pavilion for being idyllic, but these are minor points, the important thing is that people were talking about Europe.

CEJA congratulated the COM on organising a fantastic series of events. CEJA involved in many of the events especially the young farmer event, a lot of credit to the organisers and getting the message out to 21 million

Commented [kmr4]: Of what?

CONCORD reminded the members that CONCORD organised a seminar of global alliance on resilience on 28 October in Milan, which concluded with a presentation of a declaration outlining resilience and the fight against desertification. CONCORD briefly outlined the main tenets of this declaration,

including weak systems because of lack of funding from governments but also potentially from EU FTAs with African countries.

CEETAR thanked the Commission for the events and applauded them for the focus on social side of issues and expressed hope that this will happen again and continue in future.

ELO thanked the COM, including for spreading sustainable management practices and raising awareness of European issues, and asked what comes next.

The COM explained that the presentation covered DG AGR events, but all DGs which had a stake in the theme were involved. COM stated it will take note that stakeholders found it so useful to focus on targeted issues and thanks the participants

The Chair also thanked the COM for these events, in particular being given the opportunity to say something but also to gain insights from other things.

COM gave a presentation on “December 2015 Outlook Conference”

COPA COGECA warned that the macro economic outlook cannot be analysed alone without the micro economic side and that challenges are faced at farm level, agricultural, environmental, trade. COPA COGECA complained that there were no farmers on the panels at the conference but all other food chain representatives.

FoodDrinkEurope requested further discussion on the three papers

The COM explained that the 2013 data was not ready in time for them to analyse age / income / etc. but that there will be a closer look next year. Second session was a policy coherence exercise and it became clear that this needs more attention. COM mentioned Paris COP21 agreement, explaining that it will attempt to identify impact on agriculture for next year. COM stated that the conference programme evolved a lot and the final version had no farmers but acknowledges that is something to be corrected next year.

Commented [kmr5]: The first sentence is not very clear and the second one gives quite a commitment – Please check with E2 if ok

7. Exchange of views on developments in 2016

COM gave a presentation on the “developments of 2016”.

COM: Midterm review of MFF. Exercise not expected to bring about major changes on CAP.. Simplification exercise, there will be details at the end of this meeting. Creation of the Market Task Force following a commitment that Commissioner Hogan made to the Council to look at the functioning of the agricultural markets and other possible challenges for the future. The only thing which is now clear is the appointment of Mr Vermeir who was Dutch Minister for agriculture but composition of the group is not done yet. The development of the process is still being made. Second development on the market is anticipation of the milk package report, brought forward from 2018. We do not know yet how agriculture will be implemented into emissions objectives for 2030 after COP21 so we will have to see what the deliverables will be from agriculture in terms of emissions. The Commission will come forward with a proposal at some point in 2016.

FoodDrinkEurope welcomed some of the main objectives referred to, highlighting a number of issues to deal with, stating that we need to look at why there are fewer farmers. Also called for a closer look at the food chain and AGRI Markets Task Force, as well as underlining the importance of food aid within and beyond the EU. Also highlighted a focus on climate and agriculture's contribution, asked about possibility of making a presentation in next CDG about the future of the CAP based on the three brochures published before the Outlook conference.

CONCORD asked how to halt the decline of small and medium sized farms. As of 2016, should no longer talk about farming in the way we have been so far for two reasons – September adoption of Sustainable Development Goals and the COP21 in Paris. Women in farming, infrastructure investments. CONCORD asked what statistics should be taken into account in future, and called for DG AGRI to be represented in other areas. Healthy diet is becoming important should be mainstreamed in our thinking. Education and information also important for young people eating healthily.

IFOAM asked for clarification on reports on jobs and growth

COPA COGECA wanted to answer CONCORD's comment with improvements in resource efficiency

COM welcomed the comments for touching upon the real challenges the CAP is faced with. Responding to FoodDrinkEurope, COM highlighted these challenges of sustainability in terms of production and also in response to CONCORD. COM asked for all stakeholders to look at these issues together starting with the three brochures.

CEJA commented saying one of the biggest of these challenges is generational renewal in the sector, stating that all stakeholders should be with CEJA on this, it has been mentioned that there are fewer farmers and this needs to be focused on in particular

EEB asked for more clarification on the three brochures and whether they were aiming at being a support for the outlook conference only or if they were also meant to be a support for policy initiatives (like the one on land for the future of LULUCF and agriculture) . EEB also commented that the midterm review of the MFF should not be disassociated from the CAP midterm review as CAP represents a large share of the EU budget- 40% more or less and one needs to ask whether it delivers towards its objectives or not

EEB also suggested to hold real discussions about the future of the CAP in this group- maybe through the use of break out groups- indeed discussions in small groups are always more fruitful

EUROMONTANA asked to be sent the links at the end of Pierluigi Londero's COM presentation. EUROMONTANA congratulated the COM on the EXPO animation stating that it was not only for children but had things for adults too, and that a focus on young people was important to state things simply, very positive. It reminded members that farm size is a difficult issue and that these midterm reviews should give more clarity on developments on this. Not only in type of agriculture, farm size is one point but not everything, but there must be a focus on quality of products and environment and consumers and markets. EUROMONTANA also called for need to explain everything farmers do sustainably – rather stress that over the size issue.

CEETTAR stated that the relationship between production and price must be considered in policies. Reminding that on a global level, inequality as a result of fiscal regimes

COM reassured members that generational renewal is one of the key issues in the future viability of farming and a reason that a dedicated event was included at EXPO. On MFF, the COM underlined that the exercise will not touch upon the envelopes as that has already been decided. Agriculture and CAP are playing a role in contributing to a more stable environment in terms of jobs and growth for the future. COM said it was too early to question the framework of the policy that came out of the reform, so discussions must be held. The next CDG could be used to exchange of views as requested by some stakeholders. On the question of the alleged unfair competition of exporters compared to EU producers, a whole sustainability chapter is usually negotiated in bilateral negotiations. On size of farms in Europe, COM reminded that all models of agriculture need to coexist, and that each model can be targeted to a specific situation, so CAP needs to be flexible enough to cater for all of this.

ELO made the point that farmers are often very detached from the supposed objectives of the schemes, and there is a need to look at long term outcomes and goals and engage with farmers and goals to create measurable targets. Farmers are the experts in delivering whatever the COM is trying to achieve.

8. Exchange of views on Simplification [continued]

COM gave a presentation on Simplification of the CAP – State of Play

COPA COGECA brought the constant increase in burdens on farmers, whether that comes from national authorities or the EU, to the attention of members. COPA COGECA highlighted that farmers need reassurance that things are conducted in a decent way, such as controls and access to information.

IFOAM EU highlighted the HLG Structural Funds to report expected in 2018. IFOAM asked whether COM was considering simplification of rural development. IFOAM went on to question the interplay between the two pillars of the CAP, particularly considering the relationship between the two pillars as problematic in implementation, and accompanying risks of double funding. IFOAM therefore called for simplification between the two pillars – and suggested that the **acts** may have to be re-opened for this.

Commented [kmr6]: Surely meant the "basic acts"?

EFFAT highlighted the issue of unfair competition between businesses and the issue of social dumping, stating that companies providing good quality jobs should be rewarded because this leads to high quality products.

COM clarifies that HLG Structural Funds covering all structural funds, including rural development, and told members that any kind of information on this will be disseminated in due course but at the moment there are not even any dates yet so timeline is uncertain. COM informed members that it is not considering a specific rural development area for simplification. In terms of pillars, often consistency rather than simplification which is the issue. COM took note of cross compliance and workers' rights issue, but goes beyond simplification of the CAP – a matter of big policy discussions.

EUROGROUP for ANIMALS asked for more information on marketing standards for animals as there was a lot of information on horticulture, and also asked about timings for consultations.

ELO expressed concern that simplification requirements mainly driven by managing authorities and not by farmers even though there are knock on effects on farmers

COM replied to comment on marketing standards for animals, that the matter will be analysed in first part of 2016 but no deadline for text or proposal to be discussed, but when they are they will be discussed with MS and stakeholders. COM acknowledged that new rules on better regulation have not been formalized but that there has been an inter institutional agreement on this. COM reiterated that it is aware that many simplification requests come from managing authorities but highlighted again that they try to focus on farmers.

COM stated that proposals on simplification of cross compliance are expected by April 2016.

COM asked members whether a slot mid-March to end of April could be a possible date for next meeting. COM called on members to provide more information and presentations themselves, not just COM presentations. COM also clarified that although today it was mostly DG AGRI in other CDGs there are more DGs present but there is opportunity here. COM encouraged members to be in contact with colleagues about other issues addressed in other CDGs and attempt to address a helicopter view of CAP in this group – things that are not addressed in other CDGs. COM wished members a happy Christmas and closed the meeting.

Disclaimer

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