



Brussels,
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**MINUTES OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETS - HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS
in Brussels, at the
Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette CCAB, room 4.C
and online, via the Interactio platform
on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 from 15.15 to 17.30**

Chair: DG AGRI - E.2 – Wine, Spirits and Horticultural products

1. Nature of the meeting

Hybrid meeting – non public

2. List of points discussed

2.1 - Introduction and adoption of the agenda

After welcoming the participants and informing that point 7 would be removed, the agenda was approved.

2.2 - Packaging and packaging waste regulation for fruit and vegetables – update by the Commission

The Commission services presented the state of play and the next steps of the new draft, provisionally agreed, packaging and packaging waste regulation. The Council has endorsed the agreement and the EP plenary is expected to vote the agreed text in the week of 22nd April.

The Commission services gave a short presentation focussing on the provisions that are relevant for fresh fruits and vegetables. Freshfel, Copa, Cogeca and Profel expressed their concerns on the provisions on ban of single use plastic packaging for fresh fruits and vegetables weighing less than 1.5 kg and the fact that Member States can maintain by 2025 their national policies in place (article 22 and Annex V) which, in their opinion, will increase food and packaging waste and will interfere the single market as MS can set/maintain national requirements by 1 January 2025. Also, the participants asked for reassurance from the Commission services that they will be involved in the development of guidelines to support the implementation of these provisions.

The Commission services explained the outcome of the negotiations and made clear that industry will be involved in the implementation of the Regulation via the expert groups, which are currently being established for this purpose.

2.3 - Overview of latest market developments for fruit and vegetables- update by the Commission

The Commission services presented the market situation in the fruit and vegetables sector with the latest available data concerning prices, inflation and trade flows. The Commission services highlighted i) the decrease in overall inflation as well as food inflation (with however vegetables staying at higher level) ii) the decrease in input costs as well as output indexes in 2023 following a decrease in energy prices, iii) an higher turnover expected in 2023 despite decrease in volume given higher prices, iv) higher trade flows in terms of value given higher prices despite the lower volume v) latest statistics and news about three key products namely apples, citrus and tomatoes. The sector representatives stressed the decrease of production in oranges and soft citrus in Spain (Copa) and informed that the citrus production forecast for the Norther and Southern hemisphere will be soon available (Freshfel).

2.4 - Change in CN code for fresh tomatoes

The Commission services explained the current work undertaken to have more detailed CN codes for fresh tomatoes intra and extra EU trade in order to increase market transparency. The Commission services explained the process involved in such a change and that discussions are currently taking place with MS authorities in the relevant customs code committee with a view of having, if the changes are approved, a modified CN regulation before the end of the year and entry into force in January 2025. The sector representatives asked if this change would affect the trade conditions to which the Commission services responded that it is a pure statistical change.

2.5 - Annual report 2022 F&V operational programmes – presentation by the Commission

The Commission services presented the 2022 annual report on fruit and vegetables sector, covering producer organisations and associations of producer organisations, production values and operational programmes data. In autumn, the Commissions services will provide information regarding the year 2023. The participants did not address comments or questions to the Commission services regarding the presentation.

2.6 - Climate change impact on fruit and vegetable production – presentation by Profel/Frehfel/Copa and Cogeca

As a follow up of the presentation given at the last CDG (20/11/2023) and in response to the Commission services' suggestion to try to quantify climate change impacts on fruit and vegetables, Profel, Freshfel and Copa and Cogeca provided some estimations.

Profel gave the example of an individual company, growing vegetable and having freezing activities in a number of European countries, which showed a significant year-on-year decline in harvested yields from 2011 to 2022 on four different crops. Another example from a national sector association showed data on peas from three companies, which reported a comparable level of decline from 2013 to 2023. Profel informed that it intends to launch a broader membership survey to investigate the

impact of climate change and the loss of active substances on fruit and vegetable crop yields from 2008-2023.

Freshfel Europe presented an overview of the impact of climate change on the fresh produce business showing severe implications for the sector as a whole, though with noticeable regional differences. The fruit and vegetables sector is already confronted with significant decline of productivity due to climatic havocs, scarcity of natural resources and lack of protecting tools to mitigate new pests and diseases resulting from climate changes. Based on a short SWOT analysis, Freshfel Europe depicted the main drivers behind the climate change for the sector which was illustrated with case study on pears, kiwifruits, and blueberries. As there is growing concerns about food security and food sovereignty, there is an urgency to act guided by public-private partnership and consensus on actions and investments to take. Adapting and coping with the situation should be on the top of the agenda as the situation is likely to further worsen considering that climate targets are unlikely to be met.

Copa and Cogeca made a presentation on the impact of the adverse climate conditions in the previous growing season for tomato destined to fresh and processing, citrus and fruit and vegetables in cooperatives in Italy, Greece and Spain. They described how climate events affect crops in terms of yield, quality of production, development of pests, need of irrigation network, etc. They provided an estimation of the losses in production, turn-over and jobs and also commented on the limitation of the insurance system and the farmer's initiative to adapt to climate change.

2.7 - Private quality schemes requested by retailers

This point was removed from the agenda and it will be discussed in another CDG meeting.

3. Next meeting

Next CDG on Agricultural Market F&V is scheduled on 30 October 2024.

4. List of participants

Please see in the enclosed list, the organisations represented in the meeting.

List of participants– Minutes
**OF THE MEETING OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETS – HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS**
on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 from 15.15 to 17.30

| ORGANISATIONS PRESENT |
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| CEJA - CONSEIL EUROPÉEN DES JEUNES AGRICULTEURS / EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF YOUNG FARMERS |
| CEPM - EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF MAIZE PRODUCERS |
| COGECA - EUROPEAN AGRI-COOPERATIVES / GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION |
| COPA - "EUROPEAN FARMERS / COMMITTEE OF PROFESSIONAL AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION |
| ECVC - EUROPEAN COORDINATION VIA CAMPESINA |
| FOODDRINKEUROPE |
| FRESHFEL EUROPE |

Observer:

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| European Economic and Social Committee |
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