



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate D. Sustainability and income support
D.4. Environment, climate change, forestry and bio-economy
The Director

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MINUTES

Meeting of the CDG Forestry and Cork

7 October 2021

Chair: Mauro Poinelli

Delegations present: All Organisations were present, except IFOAM and WWF.

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

3.1 Adoption of the new draft rules of procedure

COM (DG AGRI) gave some background information on the Commission Decision of 25 June 2021 to extend the current setup of the CDGs until the end of 2022 with one exception: the shift of chairmanship to the Commission, in order to align with the horizontal rules (2016) on expert groups.

Some members regretted this change in the chair and its possible interpretation. COM reassured the group that it counts on the members' continued contribution to the preparation of agendas, to make sure that the dialogue is constructive and meaningful for both, Commission and CDG members.

The new draft rules of procedure were adopted.

3.2 New EU Forest Strategy for 2030

COM (DG AGRI) presented the new EU Forest Strategy, supported by a PPT presentation (available on CIRCABC).

The main issues raised by the members of the group included the Forest strategy's relation with the Biodiversity strategy, the perceived lack of consultation of stakeholders in drawing up the strategy, the governance of the strategy, the perceived lack of respect of the subsidiarity principle, the added value of the proposed legislative proposal on an EU Forest Observation, Reporting and Data Collection framework, on the strategy's possible impact on wood imports, and on the added value of the proposed strategic plans for forests.

Responding to the numerous questions and remarks made by the CDG members, COM gave the following responses:

- There is no hierarchy between the Biodiversity strategy and the forest strategy; both are Commission communications at the same level, both emanate from the European Green Deal, and both go in the same direction.
- With regard to the consultation process, an Open Public Consultation triggering thousands of responses from all stakeholders provided COM with a good overview of the stakeholders' interests, though we understand discomfort with no dedicated meetings of the relevant bodies. Balancing the different interests had not been an easy process and the process in the COM took more time than anticipated.
- On governance, there will be a body representing the member states, and another one representing the stakeholders. Discussions are still going on internally. Both bodies will be set up as soon as possible, and they will be inclusive and multi-disciplinary.
- A dedicated meeting on the new EU Forest Strategy could be useful when the different actions and initiatives it contains will be spelled out more clearly.
- On subsidiarity, COM stated that any related legislative proposals will go through a thorough impact assessment and subsidiarity check.
- On the announced legislative proposal on EU Forest Observation, Reporting and Data Collection, COM acknowledged that plenty of data are already available but the lack of harmonisation and comparability, and the need to fill some data gaps justified such a proposal. The Commission highlighted the former Forest Focus Regulation. European Parliament and Council, as co-legislators, will have an important role concerning the legislative proposal.
- On the possible effects on wood imports and leakage, COM indicated that the strategy did not impose any new criteria, and that the legislative proposal on deforestation, including new criteria for imports, will at least partly address the leakage risk.
- On eco-tourism, there was a need to build a partnership between the tourism sector and forest owners and managers.
- On the proposed strategic plans for forests, COM explained that their objective was to present a vision of forests in the member states in three steps: after 10 years, 30 years and 50 years. They would have a common structure that would allow for common elements to be addressed.
- The Commission agreed to share the statements made by the members of the group concerning the EU Forest Strategy.

3.3 Renewable Energy Directive (RED III)

COM (DG ENER) gave a PPT presentation (available on CIRCABC).

In response to questions from CDG members, COM gave the following replies:

The Implementing Act (RED II) is still being discussed in the RED II biofuels committee; a final document, including definitions, can be expected by the end of the month.

The proposed Delegated Act on cascading will be further discussed with member states and stakeholders.

With regard to no-go areas, COM pointed out that RED II was applicable to energy use of wood only, and related possible support for energy.

On the threshold for biomass installations, COM explained that the proposed 5MW threshold applied not only to public installations.

COM explained that a revision at this early stage of RED II was a political decision and consequence of the enhanced GHG reduction target.

3.4 Revised LULUCF Regulation

COM (DG CLIMA) gave a PPT presentation (available on CIRCABC).

Responding to questions and remarks from CDG members, COM gave the following responses:

On the types of land affected by the enhanced removal targets, all land types are targeted.

On harvested wood products, COM indicated that emphasis was placed on long-lived wood products, but short-lived ones were not excluded.

On the scope of LULUCF, COM stated that methane was not part of it.

3.5 Progress on technical notes and forest-related guidelines

COM (DG ENV) briefly reported on the state of play of three separate Commission guidelines in preparation:

The guidelines on the definition of old-growth forests (which is connected with the process on defining strict protection in the NADEG WG), the guidelines on closer to nature forestry, and the afforestation guidelines will all be submitted and further discussed at the working group Forest and Nature (21-22 October), and are planned to be published by the end of 2021.

There were no questions from the floor.

3.6 EU Nature Restoration Law

COM (DG ENV) briefly presented the state of play (PPT presentation available on CIRCABC).

Due to lack of time, there were no questions from the floor.

3.7 EU Actions to Halt Deforestation and Forest Degradation

COM (DG ENV) briefly presented the state of play (PPT presentation available on CIRCABC).

Due to lack of time, there were no questions from the floor.

4. Next meeting

Depending on the availability of meeting rooms (needed for simultaneous translation), either in December or January (to be confirmed).

5. List of participants

Annexed

(e-signed)
Mauro POINELLI
Head of Unit

List of participants– Minutes
Meeting of the CDG Forestry and Cork
7 October 2021

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers (CEETAR)	1
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	7
Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI)	2
European Agri-Cooperatives (COGECA)	5
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	1
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	1
European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois)	2
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	3
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	2
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	2
European farmers (COPA)	6
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	4
European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)	2
Federation Europeenne des Communes Forestieres (FECOF)	1
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	---
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	---
Union de selvicultores del sur de Europa, AEIE (USSE)	2
Union of European Foresters (UEF)	1
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	---
TOTAL:	42