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FINAL MINUTES

MEETING OF THE CDG ARABLE CROPS – STARCH SECTOR

Date: 02-12-2019

Chair: **Max SCHULMAN (Copa)**

Organisations present: All organisations were present, except: Bee Life, Birdlife Europe, EuropaBio, European Biodiesel Board (EBB), European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl), European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF), European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), Fertilizers Europe, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group), Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe) and Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations (SACAR).

1. Approval of the agenda

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was **non-public**.

3. List of points discussed [Name of each point, one by one]

Market situation for starch potato

COPA/CESPU presented the area, crop estimates and the market situation for potato in the EU. The total EU potato production was forecasted to be at 56.9 million tonnes according to the trimmed 5-year average as a result of an increased area totalling 1.76 million hectares. Yields were very heterogeneous as a result of weather conditions and the harvest had not yet been completed in all regions due to rainfall (UK, Ireland). In particular, to the main challenges for the future of the starch potato sector belong CAP (VCS), plant protection (legislation), climate change (NBT) and trade affairs (potato starch as a very sensitive product).

Phytosanitary questions

a) **CIPC**

The Commission explained that serious concerns have been identified by EFSA, in particular concerning metabolite 3-chloroaniline, which lead to Regulation 2019/989 on the non-renewal of the authorisation approval of CIPC in the EU. Regulation (EU) 2019/989 sets the maximum grace period until 8th October 2020. The Commission intended to propose a temporary MRL (t MRL) for potatoes to address cross-contamination from storage facilities jointly with the withdrawal of the current MRL set at 10 mg/kg. The Commission informed the CDG of the procedure for setting the t MRL and the calendar. The Commission would propose to submit a concern to review the Codex MRL fixed at 30 mg/kg. The Commission advised farmers to no longer use CIPC for the MY harvesting season 20/21. Furthermore, it invited the potato sector to apply stringent cleaning practices to reduce cross-contamination and develop a study to estimate the decline of residue levels over time.

COPA thanked the Commission for working on the t MRL but explained that alternative products had no proven efficiency and were much more costly. The price in the buyers' contract did not factor in these additional costs. COPA asked the Commission for accompanying measures. Studies had shown that CIPC remained in concrete in walls and with naphtalene, volatile compounds had been detected that exceeded the MRL.

FDE said that the industry was working to improve best practices to clean storage and equipment.

b) Plant Health Regulation

The Commission gave an update on the new Plant Health Regulation 2016/2031, which was due to enter into force on 14th December 2019. Article 109 § 2 repealed the existing Council Directive 69/464/EEC of 8 December 1969 on control of Potato Wart Disease, Council Directive 93/85/EEC of 4 October 1993 on the control of potato ring rot, Council Directive 98/57/EC of 20 July 1998 on the control of *Ralstonia solanacearum* (Smith) Yabuuchi et al. and Council Directive 2007/33/EC of 11 June 2007 on the control of potato cyst nematodes and repealing Directive 69/465/EEC. These directives would be replaced by the Commission implementing regulation(s). DG SANTE had set up a working group with Member States representatives to support its work. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/1702 of 1 August 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council by establishing the list of priority pests (20 Union quarantine pests) was also mentioned.

The Commission Implementing Regulation establishing uniform conditions as regards protective measures against pests and plants and repealing Regulation 690/2008 and amending Commission Implementing Regulation 2018/2019 would be published before 14th December 2019. The formats of the plant passport had been harmonised and the new format would also apply to potatoes from 14th December 2019.

COPA alerted the Commission to the severe quality problems for potato seedlings despite the plant passport. The Commission responded that testing methods would be harmonised and that the EU reference laboratories had been given a mandate to work on this.

FDE presented the starch processing industry's ambition for sustainability and underlined the major role that plant breeding research could bring in terms of improving the starch yield and consequently energy and greenhouse gas savings.

COPA called on the Commission to work on NBTs as they represented a tool with which breeding programmes could be accelerated. NBTs were not a luxury; farmers needed improved varieties to adapt to climate change and to reduce plant protection products. Farmers required the tools in order to farm.

Voluntary coupled support (VCS) and sectoral types of intervention: CAP post 2020 state of play

The Commission gave an update on the sectoral types of intervention and on the amount of VCS for starch potatoes. A representative of COPA suggested including starch in operational programmes of producers' organisations to support the bioeconomy and as an alternative to VCS.

CESPU, COPA and COGECA complained about the distortion of competition and the uneven playing field. Indeed, almost one third of the starch potato area benefited from VCS. In response to the question, FDE asked the question "How did the Commission assess the distortion of competition?"

The Commission recalled that the vast majority of direct payments is decoupled from production, and that coupled support shall only be used where justified and as long as necessary, and subject to strict pre-conditions (difficulty of the sector, budgetary limit etc.). In the CAP post 2020, some strict limits will remain. In addition, the MS will have to prepare a CAP plan according to their needs assessment. They will have to ensure consistency and assess risk of distortion across the whole Plan and within the sectors, not only for coupled support (holistic approach).

The EU plant protein strategy: state of play in the implementation

The Commission presented the updated protein balance sheet.

The Chair summarised the outcome of the workshop organised in Finland in mid-November.

FDE asked to include proteins from starch in the EU balance sheet for food outlets. Ingredient gave a presentation on the new plant based protein ingredients market. The messages of Starch Europe were included in that presentation:

Innovation funding at each level of the plant-based value chain:

- In seeds:
 - to achieve better and more stable yields
 - greater disease resistance in protein crops
- In the processing know-how:
 - to extract proteins and to convert them into animal protein alternatives
- In the application know-how:
 - on the functionality, quality and consistency of starch-protein-products in food applications

EU promotion policy (Regulation 1144/2014)

- Albeit a focus on plant proteins, some processed agricultural plant-protein products (e.g. plant-based foods) are not eligible to today's EU's promotion programme (€ 190 million in 2019)
- Starch Europe, ENSA and EUVEPRO reached out to DG Agriculture:
 - letter in April 2019
 - meeting in September 2019
- Recommendation to:
 - extend the list of eligible products contained in Annex I of Regulation 1144/2014, and/or
 - to dedicate a specific part of the 2020 promotion budget to:
 - Plant-based protein food products
 - Plant-based drinks with a minimum protein content of 2.8 mg / litre.

Brexit preparedness

Brexit preparations had been entrusted to Task Force 50, led by Mr Barnier, which had been renamed Task Force UK.

The stakeholders were informed about two Civil Dialogue Group meetings, which were to be dedicated to this matter and held on 1st February and 15th October.

The Commission presented the outcome of the EU Summit held in October and the updated possible withdrawal time frame based on the *flexextension*. The UK leaving without an agreement (no deal) could still not be ruled out. In the agricultural sector, the full spectrum of existing instruments for market support and direct financial support to farmers would be made available in order to mitigate the worst impact of a no-deal scenario on agri-food markets. After the UK's withdrawal, the transition period, during which the new relation between the EU 27 and UK would need to be negotiated, would be short because the deadline still remained 31st December 2020.

FDE: The UK represents a major market for EU-27 starch products (900,000 tonnes) including potato starch. The EU-27 did not import potato starch from the UK. Brexit would pose a problem for the EU-27 starch industry.

European Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategy

The Commission explained the general framework and the time frame for the preparation of the Farm to Fork strategy. FDE was concerned about who to speak to in the Commission as there were so many policy areas concerned.

Sustainable production of starch and its role in the EU bioeconomy/circular economy

FDE presented the Starch Europe priorities and requested that BBI be extended and remain in Commission's circular economy agenda.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

No conclusions

5. Next steps

No next steps decided

6. Next meeting

Provisional date: 3/11/2020

7. 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
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MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Bee Life-European Beekeeping Coordination (Bee Life)	---
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	---
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	1
EuropaBio	---
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	---
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	4
European Biodiesel Board (EBB)	---
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	1
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	2
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	---
European farmers (COPA)	10
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	---
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	1
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	---
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	---
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	9
Fertilizers Europe	---
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	---
SACAR - Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunies / Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations (SACAR)	---
TOTAL	28