



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate A – Strategy & Policy analysis
The Director

Brussels,
AGRI.A/TH(2022) 5233234

MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group Common Agricultural Policy

hybrid format

**in Brussels, rue Froissart 36
Building CCAB – Albert Borschette
Meeting room 0.A**

and online, via the Interactio platform

Friday 13 May 2022 from 09:30 to 17:30

Chair: Tassos Haniotis

Delegations present: all organisations were present, except CONCORD Europe, ECPA, EFFAT, SACAR and SME United. (Presence list attached.)

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

At the beginning of the meeting, Copa-Cogeca made an oral statement expressing concerns for the lack of interpretation and highlighted the ensuing difficulties for their delegations to ensure a proper geographical representation and be actively involved in the debate. The full text of that statement is embedded below and made available on CIRCA BC.



Copa-Cogeca
statement.pdf

The chair informed that unfortunately interpretation was not available despite multiple requests made by DG AGRI. The chair explained that he decided not to postpone the meeting in order to have a timely exchange of views with the members of the CDG about the ongoing situation on EU agricultural markets, the consequences of the Russian invasion in Ukraine and the observation letters sent to Member States on draft CAP Strategic Plans.

Lastly, the chair also informed that in the afternoon session, a short presentation by DG AGRI, Unit A4, was foreseen to inform the group about the new online dashboard made available on food prices, production and stocks affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The agenda was approved.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was organised in a hybrid form.

3. List of points discussed

3.1. Exchange of views with the Director General of DG AGRI, Wolfgang Burtscher, on the observation letters sent by the Commission to Member States in relation to their proposed CAP Strategic Plans.

Mr Burtscher recalled the importance of a continuous and open dialogue with stakeholders during the implementation process of the new CAP. He explained the timeline for the evaluation and approval of the CAP strategic plans, and stressed that these plans will apply as from 2023 and that their adoption will not be delayed. He also highlighted that the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the new geo-political context will be duly considered in the approval process to ensure that the CAP plans can further strengthen the resilience of EU agriculture, contribute to food security and reduce dependence on fossil fuels and feed imports. With a view to ensure a fairer income distribution, Mr Burtscher explained that despite improvements introduced in most of the strategic plans, more clarity is needed from Member States to ensure that the needs of small and medium sized farms are actually addressed. On environmental and climate sustainability, he stressed that more work needs to be done by Member States to demonstrate sufficient ambition and contribution to the CAP environmental and climate objectives. He recalled, for example, that crop rotation is the general rule to receive CAP support, and that several Member States do not respect this rule. They must demonstrate in a very convincing way why rotation is not possible and crop diversification is preferred, to be able to benefit from the exemption possibilities in the basic act. In the area of social sustainability, he highlighted the need of further improvements for several Member States as regards the business opportunities offered to young farmers, the support given to animal welfare and, more general, the funding measures made available for rural areas. On social conditionality, he noted that many Member States have decided to implement this measure at an earlier stage than the one foreseen by the law (2025).

Members noted that some priorities (e.g. organic, carbon farming) are not supported by adequate funding. On this, Mr. Burtscher explained that Member States are confronted with several challenges and that use of financial resources needs to be optimised as best as possible.

Still on organic farming, members highlighted the need for organic products to find a proper place on the market and be properly rewarded. Mr Burtscher highlighted the role of the EU Action Plan on organic to stimulate both supply and demand. He also referred to younger generations driving increasing demand for organic products.

On agro-forestry, members noted that this does not seem well reflected in the observation letters. On carbon farming, the key role of eco-schemes was highlighted. Moreover, some members called for a proper legal framework at EU level, as the one for organic, to ensure that carbon farming can be further supported and implemented at farm level.

On food security, members stressed that this is back on the agenda and that food production should not be taken for granted. The role of international markets was highlighted and the need to ensure stability in order to allow farmers to plan long-term investments.

On biofuel production, members noted that there is a risk of a polarised discussion between fuel, feed and food production. Mr Burtscher highlighted that we need to avoid conflicting situations and ensure evidence based discussions. There are no simple solutions on how to use our agricultural land.

On reduction of the use and risk of pesticides, new breeding techniques were recalled as a way to address this challenge. Members also questioned how the Commission will ensure that the SWOT will take into account pesticides-related issues. Mr Burtscher explained that the assessment of the plans is done together with other DGs (e.g. CLIMA, ENV and SANTE) to ensure consistency, also when it comes to the summary of the SWOT analysis, which is the basis for identifying the needs in each Member State.

On biodiversity, some members highlighted that the draft plans still not adequately address the challenges. On this point, Mr Burtscher highlighted the importance of ensuring further progress but, at the same time, he recognised that efforts done by European farmers (e.g. in alpine areas) should be better taken into account, when assessing the contribution of the CAP to biodiversity.

More generally, some members called on a more positive communication campaign on the contribution of the CAP to the environmental and social objectives.

The Commission informed that overview of the MS' strategic plans made available in March 2022, will be further updated to integrate the remaining strategic plans.

During the exchange of views, participants expressed great appreciation for the possibility of meeting in person and for exchanging views with the Director-General of DG AGRI.

3.2. Development assistance provided to Ukraine – presentation by Mr Markus KLINGLER, DG NEAR, Support Group for Ukraine (SGUA)

The Commission provided a state of play of the EU Emergency Support Programme for Ukraine (EUR 330 million) to secure access to basic goods and services as well as protection. It was also explained the EU humanitarian aid (EUR 93 million) being provided by DG ECHO for Ukraine and Moldova including food assistance and support to for basic needs.

DG NEAR stressed that a close cooperation is in place with other international partners, Member States and European stakeholders committed to bring assistance on the ground. On this last point, the efforts of Copa-Cogeca to provide help with seeds and machinery was welcomed by the Commission. Members were invited to be in close contacts with Copa-Cogeca in case there are further tools/assistance to provide.

Members questioned how coordination is ensured with Member States and whether there are concrete solutions on how to get wheat and sunflower seed out of the country. Some members pointed to the need to help Ukrainian businesses to export (e.g. meat) as there is a lack of knowledge among local authorities on how to comply with EU administrative procedures. DG NEAR explained that DG SANTE has provided substantial flexibility on the transits into the Union and further clarifications can be provided if needed.

3.3. Dashboard on food prices, production and stocks affected by Russia's invasion of Ukraine – presentation by DG AGRI, Unit A4 Data governance

DG AGRI presented the [new dashboard](#) developed to provide the latest available statistics on the economic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for farmers and food consumers, both in the EU and around the world. It was explained that this dashboard includes information on input and output prices, production and stocks, as well as international trade. The dashboard also contains links to other interesting sites.

3.4. The situation of EU agricultural markets and consequences for food security – presentation by Michael SCANNEL, Deputy Director General, DG AGRI.

Mr Scannel provided an overall update of the situation of EU agricultural markets and consequences of Russian aggression against Ukraine for food security. As regards the EU situation, he emphasised that we are in a good position as regards food security, in large part due to the success of the CAP. For wheat specifically, the forthcoming EU harvest will, weather-permitting, provide the EU with a big exportable wheat surplus. A number of factors will contribute to this strong contribution to global export volumes of wheat:

- The very high prices for wheat, a big incentive for our farmers to maintain or even increase production.
- A reduction in demand for animal feed from our livestock industry due to high feed costs. Projections show a fall in the consumption of compound feeds.
- Some further easing of demand for grains and oilseeds from the biofuel industry, helped by the reduction in blending ratios in fuels in some Member States.
- The modifications in our existing CAP regulatory framework such as the derogation for Ecological Focus Areas to allow the growing of fodder and crops.
- Big harvests in some other major exporters like Canada but also Russia will also help ease tensions.

However, the Russian invasion has further aggravated an already fragile situation at the global level:

- A major fear is the reduction in supply of grains that are stuck in Ukraine to global markets.
- Global food prices are rising rapidly, with export restrictions risking to further deteriorate the situation.
- The increase in energy prices drives up prices of agricultural inputs (notably fertilizer), of transport, and ultimately of food.
- The combined effects will lead to an increase in the number of countries in debt distress. On top of all this, conflicts and droughts in vulnerable regions are an ongoing risk.

In terms of market outlook, he added that with these mixed developments in mind, it is difficult to predict with high certainty how things can develop. Despite good production prospects and high prices in several sectors, the pressure of high energy prices, fertilisers and feed costs remains an important point of attention. Fertiliser prices play an important role in any predictions. Additionally, there is a consensus at all levels on the necessity to avoid any trade restrictions, as it would cause further market panic. Finally, in the EU the issue is not only about food availability, but also about food affordability. Food inflation has reached 8.9% in the EU according to the latest statistics. This situation entails risks of economic hardship for vulnerable citizens. It also risks general economic instability as high and rising inflation is always painful to correct.

Members raised concerns about the ongoing market situation. There was a general call to reduce dependency on imports of feed and energy from third countries and ensure proper ways to get wheat and oilseeds out of Ukraine.

(e-signed)
p.o. Pierluigi LONDERO
in the absence of
Tassos HANIOTIS

List of participants– Minutes
Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group Common Agricultural Policy

Friday 13 May 2022

ORGANISATION	Present Physically	Present Remotely
Beelife		Yes
Birdlife	1	1
CEETTAR	1	
CEJA		Yes
CELCAA	3	2
CEMA	1	
CEPM		Yes
COGECA	6	
Concord	No	No
COPA	6	
ECPA		No
ECVC		Yes
EEB	1	2
EFA		Yes
EFFAT		No
EFNCP	1	
ELO	1	2
EMB		Yes
EPHA		Yes
EURAF		Yes
EuroCommerce		Yes
Euromontana		Yes
FoodDrinkEurope	3	2

Greenpeace		Yes
IFOAM Organics Europe	3	1
Pan Europe		Yes
SACAR		No
SMEUnited		No
WWF		Yes
IBMA OBSERVER	1	