

Brussels,

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
4 November 2020

Chair: Zeno Piatti-Fünfkirchen (ELO)

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except CAN Europe, CEPM, EBB, EOCC, EuroCommerce, EuroCoop, Europa Bio, Pan Europe, Slow Food and WWF.

1. Approval of the agenda

Both the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was **non-public**.

3. List of points discussed

ELECTION OF CHAIRMANSHIP (agenda point two)

From the 46 participants in the meeting, 26 experts were allowed to vote in the election of the chairmanship. Zeno PIATTI-FÜNFKIRCHEN, from ELO, was elected for his first mandate as chair with 24 votes in favour, two against and zero abstentions. Niels Peter NOERRING, from Copa–Cogeca, was elected for his first mandate as vice-chair with 21 votes in favour, one against and four abstentions. Celia NYSENS, from EEB, was elected for her 2nd mandate as vice-chair with 19 votes in favour, zero against and nine abstentions.

THE METHANE STRATEGY (agenda point three)

Nicola di VIRGILIO from DG AGRI presented the methane strategy. The presentation was made available by the commission services.

The Chairman started the discussion by commenting on the long way ahead for the sector, particularly to the livestock sector due to enteric fermentation.

COPA-COGECA reaffirmed the complexity of reducing emissions overnight, particularly methane. Even with messages to eat less meat, which was still essential and demanded by the market. Therefore, there is a need to focus on lowering emissions in each producing unit, which must be supported by research and innovation, with more attention being paid to biogas and fertilizers. Improving the situation in Europe will limit the push to move production out of the EU while motivating other parts of the world to follow the same steps.

COPA welcomed the commission reliance on accurate data and the attempt to address the carbon balance in manure, stressing the importance of looking into the whole cycle. With that in mind, a question was raised on how to account for feed and its connection with soil carbon.

COPA mentioned research showing a lesser impact of methane emissions than initially assumed, due to its longevity and ask the commission views over the findings.

EEB reminded participants of the sense of urgency and magnitude of the challenge, reflecting not only the GHG impact of methane but its effect as an air pollutant, impacting health. EEB also pointed out the difference between extensive systems to intensive ones, with the latter having an ammonia problem that must not be ignored. Even if data could always be improved, EEB considered that enough information was available to justify the need to act, for instance by not giving coupled support that to intensive systems and to consider going beyond voluntary measures, like taxation.

Nicola di VIRGILIO considered the comments relevant and worth supporting, highlighting the importance of research, and mentioning that the next research programme should address this issue. Participants were invited to look into the opportunities available in rural development and the possibility of having operational groups for innovation in this field.

The commission announced they were analysing the possible methodology, which would consider all the elements that can be scientifically supported in the carbon cycle, including feed and grassland. It is important to recognise the ecosystem services linked with sectors that emit methane.

Nicola di VIRGILIO confirmed the awareness of new research and the methane does not have the cumulative effect of carbon dioxide, confirming that its short-term effect is more important than the long-term impact.

Finally, the investments in biogas were considered as a win-win solution, limiting the impact of methane as a GHG and as an air pollutant. It showcases the importance of looking into the role of research and the potential of looking into other solutions, namely in the field of feed additives.

To the written question from KONSTANTIN GOLOMBEK on the approaches being considered to implement a Carbon Farming market, Nicola di VIRGILIO replied that studies and LIFE projects were ongoing and would provide good input on carbon farming. Within the circular economy action plan (part of the Green Deal), work was to start on the definition of guidelines for a consistent calculation of Carbon credits, as well for agriculture. To date, there were examples of voluntary markets defined both in some MS and by companies. The Commission was to explore within its climatic legislation what other possibilities could be considered.

BIRDLIFE wrote a comment on the question of efficiency, referring to the RISE Foundation livestock report showing that technological solutions would not provide the

step-change required with reducing emissions from the sector. She also referred to the 'Jevons paradox' that was well established (and proven for example in the US) where efficiency gains could have a greater overall environmental impact if they led to expanded production. Therefore, a question was asked on what the Commission was proposing to avoid this scenario and to address the need to shift away from livestock (especially factory farms) for environmental, animal welfare and public health reasons.

Nicola di VIRGILIO pointed out that the methane strategy would also benefit from other EU initiatives. It would have a complementary nature and should not be seen in isolation from other proposals, such as from the Farm2Fork and even the CAP. The focus on animal welfare and extensification were important and supported by the CAP, as part of the conditionality, and possibly, going beyond with eco-schemes and Pillar II.

IFOAM wrote a question on the existence of an evaluation of the potential to reduce methane, both through actions decoupled from production, but also from actions linked to production. IFOAM considered that efficiency approaches were not enough, and more attention should be given to "sufficiency" approaches that consider the land carrying capacity and potential trade-offs and co-benefits.

Nicola di VIRGILIO replied that an assessment of the mitigation potential for methane could be found in the Impact Assessment published by the Commission for the new 2030 Climate target (particularly in the Annex II), in which "technological" and "nature-based" practices are modelled. JRC as well in its EcAMPA studies estimated mitigation potentials of a combination of several practices. As the system is complicated, in order to have an holistic approach in modelling all impacts and benefits, and to reflect local conditions, still lot of work is needed.

EVALUATION OF THE SEWAGE SLUDGE DIRECTIVE (agenda point four)

Silvija AILE from DG ENV presented the evaluation of the sewage directive. The presentation was made available by the commission services.

COPA wrote a question about other pollutants and how to include organic harmful substances. It was also asked if there was a need for regulation on better purification technologies.

Silvija AILE replied that the objective of the evaluation was to consider the emerging pollutants. Some were already regulated by MS but not integrated into the SSD. There is also the intention to look into emerging pollutants like microplastics and pharmaceuticals with JRC. Nonetheless, the need to prioritise was expected. The SSD evaluation would also depend on the urban wastewater treatment, which IA was taking place. The evaluation process was quite open, with a consultation taking place. It was recommended looking into both reviews and it was possible to contact the consultant responsible.

THE ZERO POLLUTION ACTION PLAN (agenda point five)

Michael KLINKENBERG from DG ENV gave a presentation on the zero-pollution action plan, supported by Jose ALEGRO and Susan LINDALE. The presentation was made available by the Commission services.

EEB asked if the Commission was considering proposing legislation on soil, pointing out that its absence led to a fragmented response.

Jose ALEGRO replied that it was premature to answer and that soil was featured prominently in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which was still being discussed.

HORIZON 2020 PROJECT CONTRACT2.0 “CO-DESIGN OF NOVEL CONTRACT MODELS FOR INNOVATIVE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL-CLIMATE MEASURES AND FOR VALORISATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC GOODS” (agenda point 6)

Edward OTT (Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research) and Christine HAMON (German Farmers’ Association) presented the project. The presentation was made available by the Commission services.

COPA asked if the project coordinators considered looking at the methodology of developing a payment system based on the value of the public benefits (as well as contracts) and if they know of other related work.

Christine HAMON replied that the scientific work packages looked at payments for Ecosystem Services and offered to give the contact of the responsible person on the topic.

HORIZON 2020 PROJECT DISARM “DISSEMINATING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE MANAGEMENT” (agenda point 7)

Erwin WAUTER from the Institute for Agricultural, Fisheries and Food Research (ILVO) gave a presentation on the project, supported by Frederik LEEN. The presentation was made available by the Commission services.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

Read point 3.

5. Next steps

Participants were invited to contact the chair to suggest a topic for future meetings.

6. Next meeting

No date was confirmed during the meeting but information about the date was to be expected in the coming weeks.

7. List of participants - Annex

List of participants– Minutes

**Civil Dialogue Group ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
04/11/2020**

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
AnimalhealthEurope	1
Bee Life-European Beekeeping Coordination (Bee Life)	1
Climate Action Network Europe (CAN Europe)	--
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	--
EU Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures (FEFANA)	1
EuropaBio	--
EuroCommerce	--
Eurogroup for Animals	--
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	3
European Agricultural Machinery (CEMA)	1
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	2
European Biodiesel Board (EBB)	--
European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (EUROCOOP)	--
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	1
European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)	2
European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)	1
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	2
European farmers (COPA)	4
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	1
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	1
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	3
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	1

European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC)	--
Fertilizers Europe	2
FoodDrinkEurope	2
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	1
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	--
Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunies (SACAR)	1
Slow Food	--
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	1
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	--
Extra Speaker: Leibniz Center for Agrciltural Landscape Research	1
Extra Speaker: German Farmer's Association	1
Extra Spaekers: Flanders research Institute for Agriculture, fisheries and Food	2
Total: 36	