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Directorate G. Markets and Observatories  
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## **MINUTES**

**Joint meeting of the Expert Group for Agricultural Markets-Animal Products,  
the Civil Dialogue Group on Milk and the Civil Dialogue Group on Horticulture**

*The EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme:  
taking stock after the first school year*

**Date: 11 October 2018**

Chair: Luis CARAZO JIMENEZ, Head of Unit AGRI G.3, Animal Products.

All Member States were present, except for Denmark and Greece.

The following organisations, members of the Civil Dialogue Groups or representing stakeholders in the health and education sector, were present: Birdlife Europe, BEUC, CEJA, COGECA, COPA, EFAD, EHN, EPA, EPHA, EURO COOP, Eurogroup for Animals, FooddrinkEurope, IFOAM EU Group, PAN Europe, SACAR.

### **1. NATURE OF THE MEETING**

#### **Public.**

The meeting was web streamed on the Internet with public access and the recording will remain available for two years<sup>1</sup>.

### **2. LIST OF POINTS DISCUSSED**

The meeting consisted in a series of sessions, with presentations followed by a round of questions and answers or an exchange of views.

The presentations, as well as the opening address and the conclusions, are posted in CIRCABC and available for the public in the Europa webpage dedicated to events<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Link to the recording: <https://webcast.ec.europa.eu/joint-meeting-with-member-states-cmo-committee-and-stakeholders-cdgs-on-the-new-school-scheme>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/eu-school-fruit-and-vegetables-scheme-taking-stock-2018-oct-11\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/eu-school-fruit-and-vegetables-scheme-taking-stock-2018-oct-11_en)

## **2.1. Opening address**

Mr Moegele, Deputy Director-General in DG AGRI, welcomed participants by conveying also Commissioner Hogan's regards. He illustrated the choice of the topics in the agenda and the wish to have, as a result of the day, an exchange of experience and good practice through informative, interactive and thought-provoking sessions.

## **2.2. Main highlights on implementation of the scheme**

Ms Medico, DG AGRI, outlined the main highlights from the Member States' strategies for 2017/2023: broader geographical coverage, core target group (primary-school children), trend towards healthier eating habits (fruit/vegetables with priority to fresh; milk products with added sugar in less countries and less percentage), and enhanced focus on education. Preliminary results for the first school year show a good uptake.

A round of questions and answers brought clarification on the target group and priority to organic.

## **2.3. Milk matters**

- Ms Benedics, from the Federal Ministry of Health in Austria, illustrated the approach followed to address the predominance of chocolate milk in the previous school scheme. This was to nudge towards plain milk products, through attractive communication/information measures and the gradual reduction of added sugar. The intensive cross-sector cooperation on the EU school scheme was the first real reformulation success in Austria.
- Ms Niewiarowska, from the Polish National Support Centre for Agriculture, recalled the initial concerns by suppliers and schools on the policy choice to switch to only plain milk products. The results show that the change is possible and worth trying: schools did not opt out and children are getting used to the natural taste of milk products.

In reply to the question by the Portuguese delegation on how schools were convinced to join and by the Irish Farmer Association on how children came to appreciate plain milk, she indicated that the administrative burden for schools was limited to the minimum and the biggest incentive for children is their peers.

- Ms Lynch, from the Irish Department of Agriculture and Food, outlined action to address the decline in participation under the previous school milk scheme. An independent assessment of the state of play identified the bottlenecks. Policy decisions were taken to reduce parental contribution, make participation more attractive for new schools, establish links with physical education, and carry out an information and education campaign.

Ms Regan, from the National Dairy Council, gave examples of that campaign.

## 2.4. Healthier together

Mr Mackenzie, DG AGRI, moderated the session.

- It started with a presentation by Mr Balogh, DG SANTE, on the results from the mid-term evaluation of the EU action plan on childhood obesity for 2014/2020 and on recent action to make schools a healthy place. This action includes, namely, the mapping of school food policies and the establishment of toolkits for sharing good practices, a technical report on public procurement for school food, and the choice of nutrition and physical activity as a priority in the steering group set up on promotion and prevention.
- Ms Pisano, Freshfel, illustrated ongoing work on the thematic network set up to stimulate fresh fruit and vegetables consumption for healthier consumers. She invited participants to the meeting to join this forum for dialogue with public/private stakeholders and contribute to collaboration and synergies.

A round of discussion followed, with both

- specific comments on action to promote healthy habits: EDA pointed out that misinformation on milk in social media and national initiatives on food labelling represent an issue. The Spanish delegation recalled its strict approach on added sugar under the school scheme and expressed concerns on the quality of food in canteens for which competent authorities should take action;
- general comments on the proposal for the future Common Agricultural Policy: the German delegation raised concerns about the reduction of the school scheme budget with Brexit and EPHA recommended a larger budget.

The Commission representatives a) recalled that the scheme is treated favourably compared to other CAP measures that are cut by 4% as its budget is only reduced by the UK part; and b) referred to the explicit objective in the future PAC to address societal expectations on health.

## 2.5. Going local

- M. Santini, DG AGRI, outlined the trends in public and policy interest as well as the benefits of local products and short supply chains identified in literature review. He illustrated the priorities to local, short supply chains, organic and agricultural quality products in the Member States' strategies for the EU school scheme in the period 2017/2023 and recalled the main principles to pay attention to for the proper functioning of the single market.
- Ms Marie, from the French Ministry for Agriculture, shared the approach followed in the strategy to take into account the large diversity of fruit, vegetables and dairy products. This is through priority to quality, namely geographical indications and organic and, for dairy, to sheep and goat products.

## **2.6. Educational measures: involving teachers**

- Ms Gennaro, from the Council of Agricultural Research in Italy that is in charge of educational measures under the scheme, shared experience gained. In 2017/2018, educational measures involved 12.000 teachers, who reach out to more than 332.000 children. She gave specific examples of the activities: for milk, a training action to address inter alia fallacies and false myths; for fruit and vegetables, a practical demonstration of sensory-based food education. Two participants were to find the higher number of adjectives on what a fruit looks like, feels like when touched, smells like and tastes like.

A round of discussions followed, with the Commission representatives replying to the Belgian delegate that teachers, while not eligible to the regular distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk products, may taste them as part of the accompanying educational measures as they are a role model for children. For the representative of COPA, Confagricultura, the scheme should indeed provide scientific information on food to address fake news and should educate not only children but also parents.

- Ms Krauchenberg, from EPA, gave the parents' feedback on the scheme. 80% of respondents to her survey were satisfied with the offer of fruit, vegetables and milk in schools. On the other hand, information and awareness efforts to involve parents seem necessary as for 50% of respondents the scheme is not promoted. School and home pulling in the same direction will give the best results.

## **2.7. Learning and sharing**

M. Storcksdieck, from the JRC, presented the results of work on a validated database of recommendations in EU national food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG), which will be publicly available by the end of the year. He focused on the recommendations for fruit, vegetables and dairy products and gave both quantitative and qualitative examples (eg. in the majority of them 2-3 portions of dairy products and favour low-fat/semi-skimmed).

Several participants expressed their appreciation for the JRC work: Mr Pezzini, from the EESC, who also mentioned the report on science for food that is available in all EU languages; M. Pushkarev, from EPHA, wondering if there is a trend for a sustainability dimension; M. Del Campo, from Birdlife, asking on whether data include consumption per country and sustainability considerations. Mr Storcksdieck referred to ongoing work with the Federation of European Nutrition Societies on a new framework that will include sustainability. Consumption data are not part of the FBDG database but can be found – for fruit & vegetables – on the European Commission's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Knowledge Gateway.

## **2.8. Higher ambition on objectives and result**

Ms Gerstgrasser, from DG AGRI, illustrated the policy choice for the enhanced focus on monitoring and evaluation of the school scheme. She put the monitoring and evaluation requirements in the broader context of the ever-growing focus on performance of the CAP and of all EU policies and accountability. The aim is to demonstrate the tangible results that the EU brings to business and society.

## 2.9. Did we make it simpler?

Mr Mackenzie, DG AGRI, moderated the session. Participants expressed their views on possible bottlenecks on the one hand and on simplification efforts on the other hand. Several remarks concerned, in a broader sense, the overall functioning of the scheme.

- For Fooddrink Europe, Danish Dairy Association, the new merged scheme brought positive points (focus on education) but a more complicated administration due to changes in supporting documents or IT systems which deserves consideration. The German Dairy Association indicated that some suppliers opted out as some products are no longer included or due to logistics.
- The Italian delegation outlined some of its simplification efforts targeting applicants: a six-year framework contract with fruit and vegetables suppliers (envisaged also for the milk part) and the streamlining of procedures for schools to apply. Looking forward, one of the aspects to address is how to use the amounts resulting from procurements based on lower price.
- The German delegation shared its experience with the management of the scheme, in a Federal state with a set of different regional programmes that require coordination efforts. One year after the start of the new scheme, preliminary feedback shows that the fruit and vegetables part is working well. There is an ongoing political discussion on the milk part as in some Lander the shift to plain milk products is not straightforward. Looking forward, the requirement to prioritise drinking milk over other milk products may deserve consideration: plain yogurt, for instance, may be equally beneficial. The new system for the reallocation of unrequested resources among Member States for the ongoing school year gives limited results.
- The representative of the Irish farmers association called for a forum providing a greater level of interaction among Member States. Two other participants share this suggestion.
- An exchange of views took place on how to involve teachers, in reply to the intervention by the Spanish delegation that witnesses difficulties: an attempt to overcome is the issuing of certificates for participation. The French delegation mentioned that teachers may not always have the possibility to implement the accompanying educational measures during the regular school hours. The Italian experience is that results are positive when those in charge of educational measures reach out to schools and the school heads have the final say on when awareness and education activities should take place. For Ms Krauchenberg, EPA, school heads are crucial.
- Ms Liddell, EFAD, made suggestions to improve what is already an excellent programme: envisage complementary measures alongside, such as on reduction of food waste; national authorities should encourage schools to make their entire environment healthier (e.g. policy on vending machines, availability of free fresh water); collect and share results on the assessment of the impact on health.

## **2.10. Everything under control**

Mr Riberi, DG AGRI, underlined that the audit team was involved in drafting the control provisions and guidance, for a shared understanding. The focus of the presentation was on what are the issues to pay attention to for an effective management and control system, namely with regard to the legality and regularity of expenditure.

In reply to a request by the German delegation, he clarified that information on the timeline of audits is available to the Member States, through the Committee for the Agricultural Funds, three months in advance of the audits.

## **3. CONCLUSIONS**

Ms Misonne, DG AGRI, summarised the discussions and made the following remarks:

- Member States' choices, set out in the strategies for the period 2017/2023, show an enhanced health and educational dimension;
- Health and nutrition authorities endorse the choice of products that schoolchildren receive, with a special eye on added salt, sugar and fat;
- Many countries envisage going local and giving priority to short supply chain and organic products, for the freshness of products but also for environmental benefits (low carbon footprint) and for adding value to local communities;
- The scheme is designed to reconnect children with farming and encourage healthy eating habits. Teachers play a crucial role, as well as parents who should not be forgotten;
- The scheme works reasonably well: the issues brought up - linked to the starting phase of the new scheme - do not point at difficulties that cannot be overcome.

## **4. NEXT STEPS**

The Commission will continue fostering dialogue across policy areas and explore the idea of a network for greater level of interaction among authorities and stakeholders. It will also consider setting up a database of accompanying educational measures to help spread good practices.

## **5. PARTICIPANTS**

The meeting gathered 100 participants (list in annex):

- 47 delegates from the Member States' authorities in charge of, or associated to, the design and management of the EU school scheme
- 35 private experts: 25 from organisations representing business, trade and interest groups and 10 from NGOs
- representatives of the European institutions.

Jens SCHAPS

**ANNEX. List of participants – Joint meeting of the Expert Group for Agricultural Markets – Animal Products, the Civil Dialogue Group on Milk and the Civil Dialogue Group on Horticulture. Date: 11 October 2018.**

| <b>Member State</b> | <b>Organisation</b>  | <b>Last Name</b>       | <b>First Name</b>   |
|---------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| BE                  | Service public de Wallonie   | CROZILHAC              | Patrice             |
|                     | Flemish Government - Departement Landbouw en Visserij                                | RUTTEN                 | Wim                 |
|                     | Federal Ministry of Public Health  | DOUGHAN                | Laurence            |
| BG                  | Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry   | TSVETKOVA              | Vesela              |
| CZ                  | State Agricultural Intervention Fund   | BECKWITH               | Jitka               |
|                     | Ministry of Agriculture  | MASKOVA                | Jitka               |
| DK                  | -----  | -----                  |                     |
| DE                  | Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture   | KREUER                 | Katja               |
|                     | Federal Office for Agriculture and Food  | STEINERT               | Ulrich              |
| EE                  | Ministry of Rural Affairs  | AHTO                   | Tilk                |
| IE                  | Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine                                       | DOGGETT                | Brendan             |
|                     |  | LYNCH                  | Maeve               |
|                     |  | O'KEEFFE               | Carmel              |
| EL                  | -----  | -----                  | -----               |
| ES                  | Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación                                      | PALOMINO<br>SANCHEZ    | Adela               |
| FR                  | Ministère de l'Agriculture   | BRIAND                 | Cecile              |
|                     |  | MARIE                  | Alexandra           |
| HR                  | Croatian Institute of Public Health<br>Permanent Representation                      | ADANIC PAJIC<br>PETRIC | Andrea<br>Jaksa     |
| IT                  | Ministero delle politiche agricole, alimentari e forestali                           | CAIRA                  | Antonio Mario       |
|                     |  | COGLIANO               | Caterina            |
|                     |  | RODOLICO               | Patrizia Anna Paola |
| CY                  | Department of Agriculture Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment | CONSTANTINU            | Chrystalla          |

| Member State | Organisation   | Last Name                  | First Name                     |
|--------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| LV           | Rural Support Service<br>Ministry of Agriculture   | JERMAKA<br>ORLOVA          | Marina<br>Inga                 |
| LT           | Ministry of Agriculture  | ASMONAS<br>SAVICKIENĖ      | Vidmantas<br>Rūta              |
| LU           | Ministry of Agriculture  | KRAUS<br>MANGEN            | François<br>Marie-José Justine |
| HU           | Ministry of Agriculture  | THURY                      | Eszter                         |
| MT           | Agriculture and Rural Payments<br>Agency (ARPA)  | VASSALLO                   | Malcolm                        |
| NL           | Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and<br>Food Quality  | HOEFNAGEL                  | Desiree                        |
| AT           | Agrarmarkt Austria<br>Federal Ministry for Sustainability and<br>Tourism<br>Bundesministerium für Arbeit,<br>Soziales, Gesundheit und<br>Konsumentenschutz | LAMMEL<br>ZOCH<br>BENEDICS | Claudia<br>Michaela<br>Judith  |
| PL           | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural<br>Development<br>National Support Centre Agriculture  | FEDAK<br>NIEWIAROWSKA      | Maciej<br>Monika               |
| PT           | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and<br>Rural Development   | PAIVA CALDEIRA<br>GREGORIO | Francisco<br>Maria João        |
| RO           | Ministry of Agriculture  | DREVE<br>STANCU            | Vasile<br>Catalina             |
| SI           | Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and<br>Food  | POLAK BENKIČ<br>SVAJGER    | Tanja<br>Gregor                |
| SK           | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural<br>Development   | BARICICOVA<br>KISSOVÁ      | Viera<br>Zuzana                |
| FI           | Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry   | PYNNÖNIEMI<br>SANDHOLM     | Jouni<br>Pekka                 |
| SE           | Board of Agriculture   | JIRSKOG                    | Eva                            |
| UK           | DEFRA  | GREER                      | Deborah                        |



| <b>Member organisations in the CDG Milk and Horticulture and organisations in the health and education sector*</b> | <b>Last Name</b> | <b>First Name</b> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Bureau Européen des Unions des Consommateurs (BEUC)</b>   | CALVERT          | Emma              |
| <b>Eurogroup for Animals</b>   | DI CONCETTO      | Alice             |
| <b>European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)</b>   | CARDOSO          | Fernando          |
|  | ROCHARD          | Philippe          |
|  | LINDSAAR         | Meeli             |
|  | BINNENBRUCK      | Sigrid            |
|  | VĪTOLIŅŠ         | Andrejs           |
| <b>European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (EURO COOP)*</b>   | TARSITANO        | Giulia            |
| <b>European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)</b>  | GUNNARSSON       | Tony              |
|  | WOUTERS          | Wilbert           |
|  | KEIJZERS         | Lins              |
|  | BELLEI           | Giovanni          |
|  | ZAHRL            | Robert Thomas     |
| <b>European farmers (COPA)</b>   | MEZZOGORI        | Daniele           |
|  | GYORFFY          | Camelia           |
|  | LASCURETTES      | Catherine         |
|  | GREIMEL          | Johann            |
|  | ALA-ORVOLA       | Leena             |
|  | SANTALLA         | Roman             |
| <b>European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians*</b>  | LIDDELL          | Judith            |
| <b>European Heart Network (EHN)*</b>   | KESTENS          | Marleen           |

| <b>Member organisations in the CDG Milk and Horticulture and organisations in the health and education sector*</b> | <b>Last Name</b>    | <b>First Name</b> |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>European Parents' Association (EPA)*</b>  | KRAUCHENBERG        | Arja              |
| <b>European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)</b>  | PUSHKAREV           | Nikolai           |
| <b>FoodDrinkEurope</b>   | DE GRAHL            | Amelie            |
|  | REGAN               | Tara              |
|  | HOEYER              | Lise Andreasen    |
|  | VANGERVEN           | Astrid            |
| <b>International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements - EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)</b>              | DIMITRIADIS         | Konstantinos      |
|  | SLABE               | Anamarija         |
| <b>Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)</b>  | CHRISTENSEN         | Henriette         |
| <b>SACAR - Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunies</b>   | BINARD              | Philippe          |
|  | PISANO              | Nicola            |
|  | WILLEMSSEN-REGELING | Marlies           |
| <b>Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)</b>   | MUNOZ               | Andrés            |
| <b>Expert invited in personal capacity*</b>  | GENNARO             | Laura             |

| <b>European Union Institutions</b>                  | <b>Last Name</b> | <b>First Name</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – GENERAL SECRETARIAT | KOWALIK-LUBINA   | Malgorzata        |
| COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS                            | MORAUT           | Helene            |
| EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE              | PEZZINI          | Antonello         |
| <b>EUROPEAN COMMISSION</b>                          |                  |                   |
| JOINT RESEARCH CENTER                               | STORCKSDIECK     | Stefan            |
| DG EAC  | GORAN            | Petra             |
|   | FONTAINE         | Olivier           |
| DG SANTE  | BALOGH           | Attila            |
| DG AGRI   | CARAZO JIMENEZ   | Luis              |
|   | MOEGELE          | Rudi              |
|   | MISONNE          | Brigitte          |
|   | MEDICO           | Maria Giulia      |
|   | KROMMER          | Judit             |
|   | DUREN            | Ann               |
|   | SANTINI          | Fabien            |
|   | IDEI             | Sarolta           |
|   | MACKENZIE        | Mike              |
|   | GERSTGRASSER     | Christina         |
| RIBERI  | Enrico           |                   |