

FINAL MINUTES

***Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Groups
Arable Crops***

Date: 12/10/2017

Chair: Jean-Michel ASPAR - CELCAA

Organisations present: All Organisations were present except Beelife, Birdlife, EBB, EFFAT, Fertilizers Europe

1. Approval of the agenda (and of the minutes of previous meeting¹)

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

Agenda Points:

2-3) The European Commission presented the harvest estimates as well as the balance sheets, followed by a discussion on quality of the harvest 2017

COPA stated that their figures are close to the Commission values and the harvest is still ongoing in the North of Europe, as well as for the maize. It is suggested for the Commission to analyse what led the farmers to plant less maize this year. The quality is a determining factor and must be looked into as to whether the produced grains are eligible for milling and other outlets. Farmers are balancing their economies and the Commission should look into the 5-year averages to make an analysis. Availability of seeds should be looked into and ideally a EU seed market analysis should be developed as well.

PAN Europe reminded to look into the use of pesticides.

CELCAA reminded that the global context has changed for competitiveness of grains production and exportation. The EU is losing its importance to Russia and other countries, especially in the Black Sea region.

COPA stated that it is disappointing that the EU is losing its market to other countries and questioned whether if the EU is also losing the “quality” aspect.

CEPM stated that quotas given to 3rd countries are affecting the maize production in Europe.

COPA stated that biogas plants in Italy are using commodities other than maize and there are more outlets and plant sources that could enable bioenergy production in Europe.

The Commission stated that there are WTO-based rules in place to calculate import duties on maize and the Commission’s hands are tied in its methodology and regulation.

¹ If not adopted by written procedure (CIRCABC)

The Commission informed the attendees that the issue of quality for cereals and oilseeds is reported back to the EU Member States regularly as illustrated by a questionnaire on harvest quality that was recently circulated to Member States.

PAN Europe asked the Commission to add more information on organic farming as well as more information as to where the protein crops are produced in Europe, EFA percentage, etc.

COGECA stated that Germany had a disappointing year regarding harvest quality.

FEDIOL stated that rapeseed is a protein crop as it produces more than 50% protein with its production. On the trade flows and crushing capacity utilisation, this has been high but with much low margins. This is now at risk for potential imports of soybean oil methyl esters from Argentina, due to lowered levies. This will impact protein availability in Europe and will have repercussions on oilseeds cultivation, crushing and economies.

4) The Chair and the Commission opened the discussion on protein production in the EU, and invited participants to comment on the questions circulated by the European Commission

COPA answered that Europe needs more proteins and for many years a solution has not been found. Rapeseed is an important protein crop which cultivation in the EU has been supported through the EU biofuels policy. The Commission should not change policies that alter protein production in Europe in short term, this is most prominent in biofuels. First generation biofuels have their role for the future in providing protein for Europe. In addition, plant breeding needs to be looked into to improve the potential of European crops. Plant protection products needs to be available for farmers to be able to guarantee the protein content of cereals.

EEB highlighted that two-thirds of cereals produced in Europe is for feed. Local and grass-based production systems is important to consider.

ECVC mentioned that getting protein supplies on farm is difficult. Protein is essential for crop rotation and would like to see more rapeseed inclusion in the rotation.

CELCAA reminded that substitution between plant and other protein sources must be well understood.

CEJA stated that climate is an important factor.

COPA stated that not all areas are suitable for protein crops, therefore best use of resources should be ensured.

PAN Europe asked how many countries provide coupled support for protein crops.

CELCAA reminded that land is a resource and should be used in the most efficient and effective manner. Soybeans cannot and will not be replaceable due to their high protein and efficiency. The best way to develop a European Protein Strategy is to first consolidate Europe's indigenous protein production, largely thanks to biofuels policy, and then move forward.

EuropaBio called for consistency from the European Commission in regulating agriculture.

PAN Europe called for ambition to the protein strategy. PAN Europe informed on behalf of Bee Life, that a number of projects putting in relation beekeepers and farmers on the subject of pulses production exist in France, Sweden, Belgium, Germany and that an inventory may be presented to the authorities. PAN Europe proposed to invite Danube Soya as external speaker for the next meeting to speak about their success in making non-GM soybeans for feed to Austrian livestock.

COGECA called Horizon 2020 funding to be focused on R&D into plant breeding innovation.

ECVC claimed that the Soy Declaration is working against small farmers in South and Eastern Europe.

The Commission thank the attendees for the feedback given. The Commission called for more information on ongoing projects and informed that the Commission will further consult stakeholders in the coming months about plant protein production in the EU.

5) The European Commission provided feedback from the Market Observatory and the new web platform

All participants thanked the Commission for the new platform and the information provided.

AOB

PAN Europe reacted to a few comments being done in point 1 regarding claims about low yield in oilseeds in the UK caused by EU's neonicotinoid ban. PAN Europe informed that Defra statistics had been released that same morning and had been quoted into a PR from Friend of the Earth UK and Buglife PR, The PR says:

UK Oilseed rape yields this year are at their highest ever levels, only twice before has the average yield reached 3.9 tonnes per hectare – in 2011 and 2015. Yields after the neonicotinoid flowering crop ban are averaging 0.2 tonnes higher than in the four years before the ban, new figures released today reveal (3.4 before, 3.6 after).

ENDS

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

n/a

5. Next steps

n/a

6. Next meeting

8th December 2017

7. List of participants - Annex

List of participants– Minutes
Civil Dialogue Group Arable Crops – COP
 Date: 12/10/2017

Nom/Name	Prénom/ First name	ORGANISATION EUROPEENNE/ EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION
ALEKSANDRAVICIUS	Zigmantas	COPA
ARIAS MARTINEZ	Dario	EURAF
ASPAR	Jean-Michel	CELCAA
CASTILLA BARO	Jose Maria	CEJA
CHRISTENSEN	Henriette	PAN Europe
COREKOGLU	Barbaros	CELCAA
GIBIINO	Ignazio	CEJA
GONCALVES	Jose Tello	COPA/COGECA
HAMBLY	Michael	COPA
IVARSSON	Kjell	COGECA
LABORDE	Franck	C.E.P.M.
LAURENZA	Luigi Cristiano	FoodDrinkEurope
LEIDWEIN	Andreas	COPA
LINHART	Zdenek	COPA
LUGUENOT	Francois	CELCAA
NARRO SANCHEZ	Pedro	EuropaBio
OLAH	Endre	COPA
PADOURKOVA	Adela	ELO
PASTRANA GARCIA	Gonzalo	CEJA
PETIT	Arnaud	COGECA
PIANU	Piero Luigi	FoodDrinkEurope
RACAPE	Joseph	EEB / BEE
REZZIN	Marzia	ECVC

RIBERA	Marie-Christine	FoodDrinkEurope
ROCHA	Ana	ELO
RODRIGUEZ RIGUEIRO	Francisco Javier	EURAF
ROUSSEAU	Arnaud	COPA
SALVI	Mario	COPA
SCHULMAN	Max	COPA
SEEDLER	Guido	COGECA
SLABE	Anamarija	EEB / BEE
SOLARSKI	Tadeusz	COPA
SUTKA	Aigars	COPA
TAILDEMAN	Stephane	ECVC
THOERING	Alexandra	IFOAM EU GROUP
VAN MARCKE	Geert	FOOD DRINK EUROPE