



FINAL MINUTES

Civil Dialogue Group “Horticulture, olives and spirits”
Tuesday 24 February 2015, 14.30-18.00
Brussels

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Stakeholders:

FoodDrinkEurope: Ignacio Sánchez Recarte (Chair), Ana Isabel Alves, Constance Balsamo, Bettina Breuer, Ottavio Cagiano de Azevedo, Antoni García Rojals, Chris Kauer, Paul Skehan, Kerry Walsh Skelly, Mr Van Buchem

COPA: David Brazzil, Mr Vertes, Mr Imbert, Mr Gorski

CEJA: Macedo, Del Moral

PAN Europe: Ms Slabe

EFFAT: Gaetano Pensabene

IFOAM: Ana Marija Slabe

Commission:

Ersilia Moliterno (AGRI C2), Maria Iusco (AGRI B3), Heather Jones (TAXUD C2), Daniela Terrile (AGRI R4)

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND REPORT OF THE LAST MEETING (08/12/2014)

The agenda was adopted with the inclusion of a new point under AOB: “Indication of the alcoholic strength by volume”.

The report of the last meeting was adopted, as well as the rules of procedure.

2. REGULATION (EC) 110/2008 – ALIGNEMENT AND MODIFICATIONS

DG AGRI informed the group that the Alignment of Regulation 110/2008 to the Lisbon Treaty was still blocked and waiting for a decision on the simplification of the GI schemes.

The industry requested Commission's opinion on several possible changes/improvements that could be integrated in the future spirit drinks regulation:

1. Limitation of sweetening (just for rounding off) and colouring of vodka.
The Commission agreed that with the current definition, vodka could be coloured and sweetened. Considering how difficult it was to reach an agreement on the vodka definition when discussing the adoption of Regulation 110/2008, AGRI indicated that these changes should be proposed and discussed at Council level.
2. Clarification that the Maximum Levels for certain substances set in the ethyl alcohol definition only applies to the ethyl alcohol used for the production of vodka and not for the vodka itself.
AGRI informed that this was its understanding and that it didn't see the necessity of changing the vodka definition. In case the sector faces a problem, AGRI suggested requesting the official opinion of the Commission on this point.
3. Presentation of mixtures
Concerning the presentation of mixtures of spirit drinks with fermented alcoholic beverages, AGRI explained that Commission legal services should be consulted on the official opinion on article 10(1). It was raised that any new provision on this issue should consider the production of products covered by other legislations (aromatized wines and special wines).
On the mix of aromas of spirit drinks categories with other alcoholic beverages, AGRI confirmed that in its latest draft of the alignment text, a limitation for the citation of spirit drink categories has been included.
4. Avoid any kind of classification of the spirit drinks categories in different groups.
AGRI confirmed that in its latest alignment draft, a classification of the spirit drinks categories in 2 different groups was included. The industry explained that any classification could be used by a Member State as a hook for discrimination between the spirit categories. AGRI acknowledged the concerns raised by the industry.
5. Recuperate the definition of liqueur which was included in regulation 1576/89.
AGRI confirmed that it will propose to Member States to recuperate the "old" definition of liqueur during the 20 March Spirit Drink Committee.

3. GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS IN THE SPIRIT SECTOR

AGRI informed that on 20 February, deadline set in article 20(1) of regulation 110/2008 for the submission of the technical files of existing GIs, from the 332 GIs listed in Annex III of the cited regulation, technical files for only 240 GIs have been received.

The group was informed that AGRI will now proceed to the update of Annex III. The relevant units in AGRI will continue the revision of the submitted technical files.

Concerning the possible upload in e-Ambrosia of the translated technical files, AGRI explained that it was too early to know if this evolving tool could be modified to integrate the translated files and make public accessible.

Concerning the simplification of the 4 existing GI's schemes, AGRI confirmed that a decision should be taken at Cabinet level.

To the question of the possible inclusion of a limitation for rendering mandatory the bottling if the GIs in the geographical area, AGRI confirmed that it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

4. EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORKS ON DENATURED ALCOHOL

DG TAXUD explained its work on denatured alcohol in relation with Article 27 of Council Directive 92/83/EEC. It explained that there are two main types of denatured alcohol: Completely Denatured Alcohol (CDA) and Partially Denatured Alcohol (PDA).

The Commission has identified 3 problems:

- Still too many weaker formulations
- Ease of removability of those weaker methods to return the alcohol to a potable state
- Some approved denaturants are just flavours, aromas, essential oils making the potential for fraud even easier.

TAXUD informed the group that they are facing now phase 3 of the project: denaturants for screen wash and anti-freeze. The group was requested to send examples of fake spirits made with anti-freeze or screen wash.

TAXUD informed stakeholders that an evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and coherence of the provisions of Directive 92/83/EEC has been launched and that the exemptions included in article 27 will be one of the priorities of the valuation.

The timeline of the evaluation was shared with the group. The progress report is foreseen in August 2015, the final report in December 2015 and the follow up actions (possible impact assessment/proposal) in 2016-2017.

TAXUD took the opportunity to inform the group about one of the work mainstreams of the Food Integrity Project (spiritsEUROPE is a partner) which is focused on the development of IT tools for the fast test of spirits. This work is partially based on the detection of denaturants' residues.

5. NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES / DEVELOPMENTS

In relation to notification 2014/652/F, DG GROW made a written statement to the group:

"This notification is the last of a series of notified amendments through which France amends the *Order of 19 October 2006 on the use of processing aids in the manufacture of certain foodstuffs*. The

Commission services are assessing the notified draft within the timeframe of the three months standstill period established by Directive 98/34/EC and which will expire on 31 March 2015. Stakeholders have the possibility to send to the Commission their position, which will carefully be taken into account."

The industry requested the Commission to verify that the draft amendment only applies to French products.

6. AOB

Indication of the alcoholic strength by volume

The industry explained that there is a potential problem because of the lack of harmonization, in the different linguistic versions of Reg.1169, of the suffix and optional prefixes to be used for the indication of the alcoholic strength by volume.

In the absence of SANTE, AGRI explained that probably the same lack of harmonisation existed with the transposition of Directive 87/250/CEE.

The Commission remained doubtful about future problems on the market and requested stakeholders to maintain it informed. If finally necessary, Member States will have the opportunity to request a corrigendum of the relevant linguistic version.

The group was informed that the issue will not be raised on the occasion of the next FIC working group.

Industry requested AGRI to explore with SANTE the possibility of including a question in Commission Q&A on the implementation of Food Information to Consumers regulation.

7. NEXT MEETING

The Chair complained, on behalf of the group, about the short time between the December 2014 meeting and the February 2015 meeting.

It was requested to the Commission to separate appropriately the meetings (i.e.: one at the end of February and the other at the beginning of October).

Concerning the next spirit sector meeting of the Civil Dialogue group, the Commission will evaluate if a doodle poll could be proposed to stakeholders to choose the most adequate date.

Disclaimer

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