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FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group CAP

07 February 2020

Chair: Jan PLAGGE (IFOAM EU Group)

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except CONCORD Europe, CEMA, EFA, ECPA, EMB, EPHA and SACAR.

1. Approval of the agenda

Agenda approved

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

Opening address by Commissioner Wojciechowski

The Commissioner explained the important role of the civil dialogue groups and underlined that they must not be a one-way communication but a dialogue. The discussions should be oriented towards solutions to challenges ahead of us.

Further, he explained the core elements of the Green Deal and the important contribution of the farmers. He highlighted that climate change already has a concrete impact on farmers in their daily lives. The Green Deal must and will tackle all aspects of sustainability: environmental, social and economic.

Regarding the CAP, Commissioner Wojciechowski explained that the reform proposal contains several elements which can contribute to the transition of sustainable farming practices. For instance, farmers will have to preserve and manage wetlands and peatlands which are important stores of carbon. The Commissioner clarified that the CAP reform proposal will not be amended.

On the Farm to Fork strategy The Commissioner explained that this is the strategy making European Food System sustainable and he invited all actors of the food chain to be a part in this transition. Several other public policies will be involved

- Exchange of views

Member Organisations broadly supported the aim of the Green Deal and Farm to Fork strategy with a transition towards a sustainable food chain. Questions were raised about how Member States implementing the CAP could at the same time implement Farm to Fork. Young farmers will be key, as the new generation will be in the frontline of climate

change. Several actors mentioned the social dimension as well as food must be valued at a fair price. All actors along the chain must be able to stay competitive (FoodDrinkEurope). EFFAT raised that direct payments should be conditional to the fact that working conditions such as minimum wages and collective bargaining are respected. COPA COGECA, CEJA and CETTAR stressed the need of economical sustainability of farming which includes sufficient level of investments, implementation of the digital agenda a focus on the demand of consumers. Several organisations raised the need of a fact-based policy making where proposals are supported by solid evidence.

Greenpeace stressed that the Commission has the responsibility to address the livestock sector within the Farm to Fork and distinguish between intensive livestock and extensive livestock. The last 10 years 3 million livestock farms have ceased their operations. Birdlife mentioned the loss of biodiversity that Europe is facing, which is also leading to lower yields. Several NGOs stressed the need to have binding (environmental) targets at EU level. IFOAM EU specifically asked to integrate a target for organic land at EU level in the Farm to Fork strategy and in CAP Strategic Plans.

EURAF argued that agroforestry, permanent crops, silvopasture and adaptive multi-paddock grazing have immense potential for mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity, productivity and animal welfare. These are management interventions that, collectively, are the top mitigation solution in the IPCC reports. But not being products, they are difficult for the private sector to research and sell and therefore should be publicly funded. Farmers need help and advice to implement necessary management changes.

ELO raised the topic of New Genetic Techniques, arguing that they could be helpful tools to diminish the use of fertilizers and make better use of water resources. IFOAM EU on the other hand underlined that the risks linked to the use of these new techniques might prove to be like those that result from the production and release of a GMO. On organic production and a future target, ELO stressed that any target must be based on a demand from the market. IFOAM called for a target for the organic area at 20% by 2030.

CELCAA described vineyards as carbon sinks in Europe and asked to integrate them in the discussion on the role of permanent crops on carbon sequestration. EUROMONTANA highlighted the need to keep supporting areas with natural constraints (ANCs), which count many permanent pastures. EUROMONTANA raised the issue of long-crop rotations being limited by the European law considers that after 5 years, land is not arable anymore. EFNCP also asked to change the definition of permanent pastures and want MS to dedicate 5% of their national envelopes to Eco-schemes. SME United reminded on the crucial role of SMEs (including non-farming) in transitioning to more sustainable systems and keeping rural areas dynamic.

The Commissioner stressed the need for a strong CAP where the ongoing MFF negotiations is a challenge. Regarding trade he admitted that farmers are facing competition from imported products. He underlined that he is fully committed to defend the interests of the farmers and there is a need to strive to a situation where imported products should be produced under the same standards as EU products. He acknowledged the loss of many livestock farms in the past years. He ensured that the livestock farming is going to be an important part of the Green Deal, with a particular focus on developing alternatives to industrial livestock production and increasing the level of animal welfare. He underlined the role of biodiversity, pollinators, and the will to encourage protection measures of those in the CAP. He described generational renewal as incredibly important, and the need to keep farming attractive also in the future. Commissioner

Wojciechowski highlighted the synergies between the CAP and the cohesion policy in order to keep good living conditions and professional opportunities in rural areas.

Discussion round 1 – The European Green Deal and the reformed CAP

- Presentation by the Commission

DG AGRI (T Haniotis) presented the European Green Deal, and the need to ensure economic, environmental and social sustainability. He mentioned the key topics that will be tackled, such as digitalization or the change of dietary patterns (PowerPoint presentation uploaded on Circa).

- Exchange of views

Several organisations emphasised the potential of a further digitalization of the agricultural sector. CEETAR underlined the need to use innovative technologies to limit the environmental impact of farming. For FoodDrinkEurope, digitalization is important, but the reality is different for the industry in several countries due to a technology gap. BirdLife reminded on that technologies have limits and are not going to respond to all challenges.

ELO asked how the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork will fit within the international trade context, EFFAT reminded on not to forget workers in this debate. EEB reminded on that the (political) context has changed since European elections, and the Commission's top priority is the European Green Deal. How will the 'system change' mentioned by EVP Timmermans going to be reflected in the CAP? Climate change will cause more droughts and storms, the Green Deal should promote a transfer to resilient farming systems.

Several questions were raised on the approval of the strategic plans, and how to ensure that farmers are going to take up more sustainable practices for biodiversity and animal welfare. COPA COGECA criticised the fact that the CAP barely incentivizes farmers who are improving their production systems, for example by not using antibiotics. Many organisations reminded on the important role of farmers to ensure a successful implementation of the Green Deal, and especially farmers with smaller holdings. Farmers also need a stable legal framework for the future.

Agroforestry, EURAF stressed, offers crops effective resilience to droughts and storms, and sequesters significantly more carbon. Tree alleys in arable systems pick up excess nutrients, reducing water pollution. CAP should encourage adoption of techniques that minimize impact by analyzing the whole system: livestock operations, for example, should include the environmental impacts of growing imported feeds into account. FoodDrinkEurope mentioned the European strategy for vegetable proteins and asked which tool could be used to implement it.

Mr Haniotis welcomed establishment of new farms, which is often done without public support. This is a sign of an economic development. Regarding the discussion between small and larger scale farms, he reminded on the toolbox in the CAP for redistribution of support. The CAP encourages cooperation between farmers. On organic farming, the CAP already encourages this, and an organic action plan is in the pipeline to further support the development of the sector.

On new technologies Mr Haniotis reminded on the potential and stated that the EU must be a “digital frontrunner”. This is not a question of big and small farms. Technology is neutral. There are several projects carried out at EU level (Lucas as one example) where the benefits are independent of scale of farming.

The Commission indicated that there might be more ambitious targets on pesticides and antibiotics reduction, and on increasing organic farmland. If so, the Strategic Plans will have to implement such targets. The plant protein strategy will be analysed in the CAP Strategic Plans. Moreover, he stressed that farmers would have to make the necessary adjustments to become more resilient over the years.

Discussion round 2 – what further actions are necessary for a transition to a sustainable food system?

Presentation by the Commission

DG SANTE (S Pelsser) presented the three pillars of sustainable food systems and explained that any action or target should be in phase with these three pillars. The aim of the Farm to Fork strategy is to “design a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system” and to stimulate sustainable production and consumption. Consumers should be empowered to incentivize food production for more sustainable products. Challenges exist at all stages of the food supply change. The Strategy needs to embrace all of them, keeping in mind that barriers of today can be opportunities of tomorrow. The Commission emphasized the need to have everybody on board, cooperation across governance levels and policy areas, financial support to speed up investments and support actions (PowerPoint presentation uploaded on Circa).

Timeline & next steps: current targeted consultations (January-March 2020). Communication and action plan to be adopted by end of March, and a further consultation will take place on individual initiatives.

Exchange of views

Many organisations asked for binding targets and not only aspirational in the legal proposals to follow the Farm to Fork strategy. This would be the only way for the Member States to be forced to act on pesticides reduction. IFOAM EU asked how the targets will be transposed into national legislation and how is the Commission planning to consult regions and local authorities. FoodDrinkEurope and CELCAA stressed the importance of sustainable consumption and asked which definition the Commission will use for sustainable food systems, and what will be the role of Scientific Advisory Mechanisms (SAM) in the implementation of this strategy?

The issue of high consumption of meat and dairy product was raised, as well as the need to raise awareness among consumers of environmental impacts of animal-based food products. EUROMONTANA also reminded that in some regions, livestock farming is the last activity and is therefore crucial for the survival of rural communities. EURAF stressed that well-managed permanent pastures can be a net carbon sink. Stakeholders asked to include the social dimension and talk about the qualification of workers in the debate. ECVC highlighted that children are an important target group for changing eating habits and local supply chains should be further encouraged. COPA COGECA stressed the need to have up to date reliable data on food waste and that food safety must never be compromised on. The use of sewage/sludge to a larger extent would be desirable but currently the transfer of undesired substances within the food chain could not be prevented. EFSA has an important scientific role here. New technologies must be allowed to allow more alternatives to tackle for example diseases. EFFAT also described EFSA’s role as essential and called for a more ambitious budget for EFSA.

The Commission reminded on that the Farm to Fork strategy, which still being drafted, is not only a DG SANTE Strategy but will be adopted by the Commission. The Strategy will stress the need to change how and what we eat, and that the healthy choice needs to become the easiest choice for consumers. The labelling of the origin of food is part of the Green Deal. Organic farming, considered as part of the solution, is likely to be part of the strategy. SAM has an independent scientific mandate from the Commission; and it will adopt new recommendations this March. The circular economy will be part of this

strategy, as cities and regions are laboratories of changes, the Commission will support efforts made at local level. A new methodology (laid down by the Commission) for measuring food waste in the EU has recently been adopted and the data will be available in 2022.

A public debate on the Farm to Fork strategy in 2020- stakeholder initiatives

- Presentation by the Commission

The Commission (G Schithuis and P Schellekens) reminded on that the voice and interests of the Civil Society will be important in the implementation of the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork. The CAP Strategic Plans regulation requires Member States to involve stakeholders at several stages of the process (PowerPoint presentation is uploaded on Circa). The Commission representatives explained that several communication measures, including the Civil Dialogue Groups, are foreseen to encourage a dialogue with stakeholders and the general public.

- Exchange of views

All organisations supported the need for the Commission to listen to the civil society in order to ensure the implementation of the Green Deal. Enough time for discussion with stakeholders will be needed. CELCAA and COPA-COGECA representatives mentioned the swine fever crisis and the need to consider scientific recommendations and the needs explained by farmers. ECVC raised the issue of abandonment of farms, which is linked to CAP's direct payment system. Developing a CAFP (Common Agricultural and Food Policy) would be a concrete way to link farms to forks. Generational renewal was mentioned as one key issue in rural communities. WWF expressed their doubts about the alignment of CAP and Green New Deal priorities. Birdlife proposed to have a check of the situation based on scientific data during the next CAP CDG.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

As conclusion, the Commission acknowledged that there should be a continued support for small farmers. The CAP reform needs to support the implementation of the Green Deal. With the Farm to Fork, the Commission will provide with further political priorities for the next five years.

The Chair concluded with proposing to have another discussion on the state of play on the Member States' CAP Strategic Plans in the next meeting.

5. Next steps

He expressed a preference to have another CDG taking place in May or June before the beginning of Trilogues on the CAP reform. During that CDG, stakeholders do ppt-presentations. Another CDG is foreseen in autumn. Back to back to that meeting a meeting with stakeholders on the Farmers of the Future is foreseen.

6. Next meeting

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."

7. List of participants - Annex

List of participants– Minutes
Civil Dialogue Group CAP
Date: 07/02/2020

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Bee Life-European Beekeeping Coordination (Bee Life)	1
CONCORD Europe	----
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	1
Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers (CEETAR)	1
CEMA - European Agricultural Machinery Industry Association (CEMA)	----
EuroCommerce	1
Eurogroup for Animals	----
Euromontana	2
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	6
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	2
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	2
European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)	4
European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)	---
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	3
European farmers (COPA)	6
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	4
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	1
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	4
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	4
European Milk Board (EMB)	----
European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)	----
FoodDrinkEurope (FoodDrinkEurope)	6
Greenpeace European Unit	1
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	4
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	1
SACAR - Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunion / Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations (SACAR)	----
SMEUnited	1
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	2
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	2

Total: 59