



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate E - Markets
The Director

Brussels,
AGRI.E.1/IJ/pm (2024) 3756439

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETS
in Brussels, at the
Centre de Conférences Albert Borschette CCAB, room 4.C
and online, via the Interactio platform
on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 from 14.30 to 15.15**

Chair: Pierre Bascou

- 1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting**
- 2. Nature of the meeting**

This was a non-public meeting.

- 3. List of points discussed**

3.1. Commission presentation followed by a Q&A on next steps to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

As part of the Commission's response to the current crisis situation in the agricultural sector, the Commission is currently working on a list of actions aimed at improving the position of farmers in the food chain and their remuneration. This meeting with stakeholders across the food supply chain was convened to present the list of actions that the Commission is considering to address the concerns expressed by farmers in recent protests as regards the functioning of the supply chain, mechanisms for the distribution of added value and the remuneration of farmers.

To this end, the European Commission presented a reflection paper to the co-legislators, discussed during the March AGRIFISH Council, that could be taken forward in the short and medium term on this topic.

The Commission informed on two measures already in progress: the creation of an EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory (AFCO) on production costs, margins, and trading practices on 9 April 2024, with an inaugural meeting expected for mid-July; and the upcoming publication of the Report on the implementation of the UTP Directive on 23 April 2024.

The Commission also informed on possible legislative steps planned to strengthen the position of farmers in the supply chain, namely the possibility for a targeted amendment

of the Common Markets Organisation (CMO) Regulation and other CAP-related basic acts, as well as a new EU Regulation on cross-border enforcement of UTPs, that could complement the existing UTP Directive. This would be complemented at a later stage by the ongoing evaluation of the UTP Directive, which will involve several consultation activities, including workshops, planned to gather evidence on the effectiveness of national implementation. The evaluation is scheduled for 2025, accompanied or followed, if appropriate, by legislative proposals.

Several participants (FoodDrink Europe, COPA, COGECA, ECVC, Independent Retail Europe) welcomed the ideas presented to improve the position of farmers in the food supply chain and raised different questions.

FoodDrink Europe asked more information about the envisaged membership of the newly announced observatory and the envisaged timing for possible amendments to the CMO regulation. IFOAM expressed particular interest in measures to further develop sustainable public procurement in creating market opportunities for sustainable products, beyond the public sector, and actions to support retailers and processors in offering organic products in the market. COPA expressed that the simplification package had had an immediate signal to farmers that policymakers are listening and called for innovative approaches to swiftly modify the CMO regulation to support the weakest actor in the food supply chain, referring to farmers. COGECA recalled the importance of cooperatives in supporting farmers in collective negotiations and in getting returns from the market, and appealed to the legislator's responsibility to not create complex measures that could leave high responsibility to individual producers. They also reminded that the UTP Directive is not aimed at governing markets or bring overall agri-food policy orientation, which requires a much broader debate. FRESHFEL asked the Commission to consider the particularities of the different sectors, and how important it is for them to have flexibility to implement crisis measures and deal with their market reality. IRE mentioned that the AFCO could help bring transparency and ease relations in the food supply chain. Regarding the UTP Directive, both IRE and Eurocommerce expressed that there are unfair practices banned downstream but not upstream, and that since many MS had gone beyond the minimum UTP Directive requirements, cross-border enforcement had to avoid market fragmentation. ECVC questioned the timing to review the UTP Directive and asked to speed up the process. They also shared that many of their farmers had difficulties filling in surveys related to the UTP Directive, as they are unaware of the transposition in their MS. COAG welcomed the possibility to have obligatory contracts along the chain and covering production costs, but underlined that this could also be detrimental if the Commission does not work at the same time with imports from third countries at lower costs.

The Commission thanked participants for the broad support on ideas to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain and reassured that the market orientation principle would be respected. The Commission further stressed that it intended to build on existing structures, improve and optimise them in a very targeted and focused manner without overloading MS and private stakeholders in terms of administrative burden.

With regard to the constitution of AFCO, the Commission further informed that MS would be requested to nominate two members and confirmed that stakeholders would at least need to be active in two MS. As the expert group would likely have around 80 members, national groups, whilst interesting, would not be envisaged for the sake of keeping the number of members operational.

The Commission also informed that targeted amendments to the CMO Regulation could be proposed before the summer. With regard to public food procurement, the Commission mentioned that this can be a strategic tool to increase resilience and transition and to develop some markets of sustainable products.

4. Conclusions

During this short meeting the Commission presented and exchanged on the ideas included in the reflection paper presented to the co-legislators and that will be further explored and discussed at different levels, to improve the remuneration and position of farmers along the food supply chain.

5. Next steps

Pierre Bascou invited participants to send written comments to agri-e1@ec.europa.eu

6. Next meeting

This was an ad-hoc meeting.

7. List of participants

Please see in the enclosed list, the organisations represented in the meeting.

List of participants– Minutes
**OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP
ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETS**
on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 from 14.30 to 15.15

ORGANISATIONS PRESENT
ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS EUROPÉENNES FRUITIÈRES LÉGUMIÈRES ET HORTICOLES (AREFLH)
AVEC - ASSOCIATION OF POULTRY PROCESSORS AND POULTRY TRADE IN THE EU COUNTRIES
BEE LIFE - EUROPEAN BEEKEEPING ORGANISATION
BEUC - BUREAU EUROPÉEN DES UNIONS DE CONSOMMATEURS
CEFIC - EUROPEAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRY COUNCIL
CELCAA - EUROPEAN LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR THE AGRICULTURAL AND AGRI-FOOD TRADE
COGECA - EUROPEAN AGRI-COOPERATIVES / GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
COPA - "EUROPEAN FARMERS / COMMITTEE OF PROFESSIONAL AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
EFFAT - EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS IN THE FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM SECTORS
EURO COOP - EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF CONSUMERS COOPERATIVE
EUROCOMMERCE
EFA - EUROGROUP FOR ANIMALS
EAPF - EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS
ECVC - EUROPEAN COORDINATION VIA CAMPESINA
EEB - EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU
EUROPEN - THE EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENT AISBL
FEEDM - FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE DES EMBALLEURS ET DISTRIBUTEURS DE MIEL
FACENETWORK - FARMHOUSE AND ARTISAN CHEESE AND DAIRY PRODUCERS' EUROPEAN NETWORK
FEFAC - EUROPEAN FEED MANUFACTURERS FEDERATION / FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE

DES FABRICANTS D'ALIMENTS COMPOSÉS
FEFANA - EU ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALITY FEED INGREDIENTS AND THEIR MIXTURES
FOODDRINKEUROPE
FRESHFEL EUROPE
IBMA - INTERNATIONAL BIOCONTROL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
IFOAM - INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP
INDEPENDENT RETAIL EUROPE (IRE)
SLOW FOOD

Observer:

European Economic and Social Committee
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