



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate C. CAP Strategic Plans I
The Director

Brussels,
AGRI.C.1/mga(2022)3686417

«CDG RURAL DEVELOPMENT»

MINUTES

Meeting of the CDG RURAL DEVELOPMENT

04 April 2022

Chair: Silvia MICHELINI

Delegations present: All Member States were present, except APURE, CEPF, EuropaBio, ECPA, EURAF, ELARD, FoodDrink, IFTF, PAN Europe and RED.

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of previous meeting of 26th November 2021 were approved

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

- Food security and resilience of the food systems

DG AGRI Unit A1 presented the Communication on Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems published on the 23rd March 2022. The Communication sets out the Commission response to the invitation of the European Council in its Versailles declaration of 10 and 11 March 2022, to present options to address rising food prices and the issue of global food security. It is based on an assessment of the situation and builds on its vision for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system laid down in the European Green Deal and its Farm to Fork Strategy. It lays out short term measures to support food security and

agriculture in Ukraine, global food security, as well as producers and consumers in the EU. It also calls for addressing the deficiencies revealed by the developing crisis in ways that enhance the transition towards sustainable, resilient and fair food systems in the EU and globally.

The negative impacts of the high prices of fertilisers, gas, fuel and commodities as well as impacts for fertilising, harvesting, processing and transport were discussed.

Food inflation in the EU is at record levels. Based on the above mentioned challenges, the Commission has come up with a list of actions for global food security such as financing strategies for developing countries in order to sustain the green recovery. Macroeconomic support for food deficit countries through instruments such as macrofinancial assistance or budget support in developing countries can play an important role in easing the pressure caused by high import costs.

The Commission is engaged in several platforms to analyse and monitor global agricultural commodities and food insecurity and participates in the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), which was developed after the last food crisis in 2008-2009.

The Commission advocates against export-restrictions and export-bans to avoid “panic reactions” and that countries would not introduce large-scale export restrictions, and will continue to support countries in their transformation towards resilient and sustainable agriculture.

The Commission will continue to provide humanitarian assistance not only to Ukraine but also to developing countries. To support Ukraine’s food security, the Commission has in place humanitarian assistance and support to the agriculture and fisheries sector in close cooperation with international partners.

In terms of humanitarian aid: the Commission has operational amounts of 93 million € for Ukraine and Moldova, and this includes food assistance and support for basic need. The Commission is developing an EU Emergency support program in favour of Ukraine of 330 million € which will help to secure access to basic goods and services as well as protection. Ongoing programs where Ex. Provision of vegetable seeds to small farmers and households.

In terms of macroeconomic support for Ukraine, DG ECFIN has macro-financial assistance programme for Ukraine of over 1.5 billion €. Member States also have financial support programmes for Ukraine.

On the actions for **EU food security**: the Commission is helping vulnerable EU citizens deal with food security challenges through a fund for the most deprived which is called FEAD.

The Commission has set-up package of 500 million € to support farmers most affected. Member States can top-up this support by 200% of national aid and it will be up to Member States to decide which farmers have been most affected.

There is a derogation on certain greening obligations in 2022, which will bring additional agricultural land into production (up to 4 million hectares) subject to Member States’ decision, to alleviate food security and the pressure on the markets.

The Commission has also introduced market safety net measures and a temporary crisis framework for State Aid. Member States are encouraged to prioritise investments, which would reduce the dependence on gas and fuel. This could be through increasing sustainable biogas production or by increasing the area under precision farming. The Commission is also encouraging member states to make use of carbon farming methods and agro-ecological practices

Member states can do a lot when it comes to effectiveness and coverage of social protection systems to support the most vulnerable population through targeted schemes

The Commission stays firm in its commitment to the implementation of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies. Food sustainability is a pre-condition for food security in the long term. The Commission is planning to review its protein policy to reduce the dependence on imports

Stakeholders raised several questions mainly regarding the measures to strengthen food security. The Commission is aware of the possible impact on biodiversity, but as the EU has the highest productivity in the world, it has to make a contribution for global food security. Food waste is also a concern of the Commission shown in the Communication, but consumption patterns take time to change.

The Commission recalled a number of actions under the Farm to Fork strategy which tackle food waste and are aiming at consumers. The Commission is working on sustainability labelling and on a legislative framework for sustainable food systems. The Commission continues also with the implementation of the organic action plan.

Stakeholders asked for specific measures to support small-scale farming and presented their concerns of the long-term effects versus the short-term needs. With a view to support small farmers, the Commission plans to redistribute better and more particularly to small-scale farms.

Stakeholders asked for more information about the production of biogas and the use of waste and residues. The Commission referred to the recent energy Communication REPower EU, which refers to sustainable biogas production.

The Commission received comments on the publication of the Observation Letters. The Commission wanted to give Member States the possibility to comment them before publication.

- Rural pact: concept, conference and exchange of views on engaging stakeholders

The civil dialogue group enquired about the organisation of the attendance in the Rural Pact conference and mechanisms that were foreseen for people to contribute their thinking about the Rural Pact. The Commission informed about the elements provided to the members of the Rural Pact community and the key moments to contribute inputs: the pre-events in the morning of 15 June, the stakeholder panel on 15 June afternoon and the breakout sessions on 16 June.

Members also asked why the CDG was not part of the Rural Pact preparatory group. The Commission explained that first steps of brainstorming required a limited configuration and that actors mentioned in the Communication were included. However,

the proposals of the preparatory group will be shared with the community ahead of the conference so that all can have a say and contribute their ideas.

Moreover, CDG members asked if the issue of biodistricts would feature in the conference and how the Commission planned to ensure that farmers are fully involved, while not mobilising too many resources from the CAP that need to be invested in supporting farmers. The Commission noted the suggestion on biodistricts and reassured the group that the role of farmers is seen as very important but the future of farming precisely depends on rural areas remaining vibrant.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The meeting was very informative on major current issues

5. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 16th November 2022

6. List of participants

Please check below

(e-signed)

Silvia MICHELINI

List of participants– Minutes
Meeting of the CDG RURAL DEVELOPMENT
04/04/2022

MINISTRY OR ORGANISATION
Association des régions européennes des produits d'origine (AREPO)
Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers (CEETTAR)
Euromontana
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)
European farmers (COPA)
European Federation of Rural Tourism (RuralTour)
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)
European Milk Board (EMB)
European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA)
IFOAM Organics Europe
PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe
SMEUnited
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)