

MINUTES
CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON FORESTRY AND CORK
9th June 2016

1. Approval of the agenda and minutes of the meeting of the CDG on 8 December 2015

The Chair asked the members to approve both the minutes of the previous meeting and the agenda.

The group discussed the minutes and the procedure to approve the minutes. A last-minute suggestion was made by CEETAR relating to illegal forest work and a correction to point two on Vice-Chairpersons was made by CEPF. The minutes and the agenda were approved right after.

In addition, it was noted that the Commission should send the minutes to the members of the group earlier, to ensure that they have enough time to go through the text. The Commission sends the minutes to the group one month before the meeting at the latest and the participants have 15 days to comment on the text. The Commission reminded the members that all comments should be sent to the Chairmanship on time. If the deadlines are not met, it is challenging to follow the process.

The Chair thanked Mr Giuseppe Palermo from the Commission for his good work in this Civil Dialogue Group. On behalf of the group, the Chair wished Mr Palermo all the best for his retirement.

2. Agenda of the Chairmanship

The Chair introduced the agenda of the day in more detail and explained how the current topics had been chosen. The Chairmanship organizes face-to-face meetings in Brussels and the most relevant and current forest-related EU policies are included on the agenda. The Chair informed the CDG that the agenda item on the Fitness Check of the Bird and Habitats Directives had been withdrawn due to the delay in the Commission's report.

The Chair informed the participants that some organisations would like to give their own presentations during the Civil Dialogue Group. The Chair suggested an informal meeting prior to the Civil Dialogue Group in which this would be possible. The Chair added that the informal get-together would strengthen cooperation and organizations would be able to network. Consequently, the Chair proposed to organise the first informal meeting prior to the next CDG on Forestry and Cork.

3. CDG resolution on LULUCF (for approval)

The Chair informed the participants about the LULUCF resolution procedure. The resolution had been suggested by Birdlife during the previous Civil Dialogue Group and the EEB prepared the first draft. Brussels-based organisations provided their comments and a meeting was organised by the Chairmanship. After an agreement, the draft was sent to the participants of the group for comments.

A final draft was made by taking these comments into account. Finally, the Chair presented the final draft and asked for its approval.

EURAF said that land use in most EU countries is a mosaic of forestry and agriculture and many farmers are also forest owners. Having the two main components of land use dealt with by very different reporting and accounting systems would greatly complicate future farm audits and subsequent farmer incentive-setting measures. EURAF reminded those present that the IPCC recommended that AFOLU (Agriculture Forestry and Other Land Use) replace LULUCF in the GPG 2006 and that the EU LULUCF decision said that it was 2006 GPG guidance that would be followed. Furthermore, EURAF mentioned that the DG CLIMA consultation on 15th June showed that the votes in favour of opinion 1 on status quo were only slightly ahead of opinion 2 (integrated land use pillar), with most votes in favour of a combination of the options or concluding that it was too early to decide. As a conclusion, EURAF considered that there was insufficient information available to make a decision, and discussion on a reporting using single land use pillar is complicated because of overlapping considerations related to emissions sharing.

COGECA reminded those present that the Commission's proposal is only upcoming and it is difficult to predict its content. The issue has been discussed for nearly four years and it would be good to adopt the resolution in order to highlight the important role of forests and forest-based products in climate change mitigation. COPA and COGECA said that we have had a long process to reach a consensus and reflect different approaches. They added that if we wait for the Commission's proposal it might be too late for this kind of resolution.

CEPI gave its support to the previous statement and emphasised the importance of a resolution prior to the Commission's proposal. CEPI reminded the CDG that the Commission had consulted all stakeholders on the policy and that it was of the utmost importance to approve the resolution.

ECVC highlighted that the framework should be based on engagement and respect the subsidiarity of the Member States. It should be adaptable to the varying conditions of different regions. ECVC proposed an amendment to the resolution.

BirdLife gave its support to the original resolution and hoped that the group would approve the resolution prior to the Commission proposal. It was noted that the resolution is just a first step and the intention was not to include further policy recommendations, such as those mentioned by the previous speaker.

The Chair read the amendment by ECVC, which the group did not agree with. As a result, the resolution was approved without any further changes. The Chair informed the participants that the document would be sent to the relevant Commission services by the CDG FC Secretariat.

4. CDG opinion on the role of forests in the strategic approaches to EU agricultural research and innovation (for approval)

The Chair informed the participants of another resolution to be approved by the group. The aim of this resolution was to strengthen the role of forests in the strategic approaches to EU agricultural research and innovation. The first draft had been prepared by CEPF and other organisations further developed the text, which was agreed by the Chairmanship. The Commission sent the agreed version to the members of the group and their comments were taken into account in the final version.

The Chair underlined the importance of getting the resolution approved as the Commission was working on the EU Agricultural Research and Innovation Strategy.

COPA asked if the document was a resolution or an opinion.

The Chair answered that the term resolution was a more accurate description of the actual aim of the paper, a strong message to the Commission that forests should be more visible and existing work at EU level should be taken into consideration when the Commission is developing a new strategy.

The EEB raised the concerns it had about the resolution and wished to discuss the paper before its approval.

EFFAT gave its support to the resolution but raised a point on healthy and safe working conditions, which it believed should be included in the text.

WWF said that it was not comfortable endorsing the aim of the strategy without understanding it better – as was now suggested by the draft Resolution.

COPA-COGECA reminded the participants that this resolution went through the same process as the resolution on LULUCF and everybody had a chance to comment on it. The COPA representative added that if the resolution were not approved that day, it would not make sense to go further with it. COPA suggested that the text should be amended at the meeting in order to get it approved.

CEPF gave its support to COPA and suggested that the text should be improved during the meeting. In addition it was mentioned that the focus should be on forests and the text should draw attention to work conducted in the past. Agriculture should not be mentioned, as the main message would be on forest research.

The EEB pointed out the most problematic sentence and suggested that it should be looked at during the lunch break. The Chair approved this suggestion.

After a few modifications to the original text, the group reached a consensus and the resolution was adopted during the meeting.

5. Exchange of views on the Bioenergy Sustainability Policy

The European Commission, DG AGRI, gave a presentation that is available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

The EEB asked the Commission for a clarification about the third slide of the presentation. The EEB asked if “biomass and renewable waste” include only wood-based waste or all waste such as household waste. The EEB suggested that the presentation should refer to all waste.

CEPF thanked the Commission for the clear presentation and noted that trade and imports are an essential part of the policy and that their economic impacts need to be taken into account. CEPF called for transparency and clarity when it comes to policy impacts in practice.

CEI-BOIS noted that the wood for energy also includes side-streams from sawmills and these two should not be separated.

CEPF raised its concerns about the distortion of the internal market that the policy may bring about. Currently, solid biomass is imported by Belgium, the UK and Netherlands. These countries have or

are developing their own strategies and rules, which have to be reviewed under the Technical Standards Directive in order to not cause any distortion to the internal market. Competition for raw material at local level is healthy and it should be kept in mind, as the Commission has previously also said that biomass is only a side-product of our robust forest sector. Furthermore, CEPF reminded those present that only 4 per cent of our imports are from the USA, Canada and Russia and it would be much more efficient if we could have bilateral agreements with these countries. In addition, as Commission President Juncker is concentrating on the big issues, this should be left aside as it is a small issue.

CEPI said that different schemes in MS are causing more and more distortion to the wood markets and that these markets are increasingly disconnected from the dynamics of the pulp markets. It must be acknowledged that subsidies have led to unfair competition of markets.

Birdlife noted that many of the issues identified are also their concerns. The ILUC debate in 2008-09 should be avoided and it is clear that these national schemes do not work and we need support for good use of bioenergy. It is very important to go beyond Sustainable Forest Management and LULUCF and make sure that bioenergy is only promoted when it significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions. A sustainability policy for bioenergy needs to include specific policy measures geared towards this goal.

COPA expressed its disappointment, as it seemed that the EU was uncertain about its future energy policy. By using biomass, the greenhouse gas savings become a reality and it should be kept in mind that we must move towards a society free from fossil fuels. COPA agreed with BirdLife on the issue of resource efficiency but considered the use of biomass as a clear solution to tackle climate change.

The EEB pointed out that much research shows that when harvesting wood for energy there are impacts on ecosystems. Certain wood species in France have been used only for energy purposes and this has an impact on the forest's role as a carbon sink not only in France but in other countries too. The EEB expressed its disappointment on the issue and added that it wished to continue to have constructive dialogue in order to be able to share some opinions.

CEPF asked whether the EU was the right platform to solve certain problems that may occur on a local level. The CEPF representative added that perhaps the subsidies and their local impacts could be looked at more in detail and policies could be developed at national level. CEPF suggested that the previous speaker should turn to the national authorities or ministries to solve the problem. It should not be an EU issue and not up to them to adopt policies.

The EEB reminded those present that it is key to recognise that bioenergy incentives create an additional demand at a scale that cannot be supplied sustainably. Increasing demand and use of biomass for energy already has a negative impact on the environment and climate. We should tackle these problems where they stem from, at EU level.

The ELO noted that UK had to go through the development of sustainability standards for biofuels and it would be unfortunate if solid biomass has to go through the same process. The ELO stressed that if the issue was not addressed, there was a danger that these markets would be lost.

COPA also entered the debate on greenhouse gas savings and bioenergy and stressed that we must look at the bigger picture and think about how to reduce the use of fossil-based materials and overall energy use. One part of the solution is how we manage to increase the use of renewables. The whole forest sector argues that our business is sustainable and if we manage to establish a policy without

any additional administration, we are ready to welcome it. It is out of question that we end up in a situation where the share of renewables is reduced.

CEPF reminded everyone that sustainability has three pillars and that the whole group agrees on that. Focussing solely on the environmental side of things would not be beneficial for long-term policy.

The Chair summarized the point and concluded that there are different and complex pictures and many links to other policies as well. The Chair encouraged the Commission to take a broad approach to the topic and to ensure that this does not have an impact on administrative burden.

Answers from the Commission

The sustainability policy for solid biomass has many different views and links to different policies that need to be taken into account. The Commission said that it was not uncertain of the future policy and was analysing concerns and other elements in order to come up with a proposal by the end of the year. As the Commission was assessing policy tools, all concerns such as subsidiarity and administrative burden must be taken into account. The Commission was in the middle of the impact assessment and in the next CDG on FC more information about proposed policy tools would be available.

The Commission mentioned that similar concerns had been raised in the consultation and at the stakeholders' conference. All concerns would be analysed and assessed. The Commission mentioned that some kind of regulatory framework would be necessary.

Regarding the EEB's question on the presentation and the waste part of it, the Commission promised to look at it more carefully.

6. Exchange of views on the review of the Bioeconomy Strategy

The European Commission, DG RTD, gave a presentation on the review of the Bioeconomy Strategy. The presentation was put on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

CEPF encouraged the Commission DG RTD to strengthen the links to the European Forest Strategy. This strategy should be a part of or included in the Bioeconomy Strategy.

CEI-BOIS thanked the Commission for the presentation and commented that wood construction was not mentioned in the strategy. However, the Commission talked about the importance of the sector for Finland and informed the participants about several initiatives that promote the sector. CEI-BOIS asked if it was possible to make a recommendation to include the wood-working industry in the Bioeconomy Strategy. In other parts of the world (China, India and North Africa), strategies emphasise the importance of wood construction as an emerging sector.

The ELO said that the Commission should pay attention to economically available biomass and noted that there is a high amount of available biomass for mobilization. Bureaucracy forms a barrier that leads to a situation where biomass is not mobilized to the markets. New uses of biomass should be developed and there should be a common understanding that there are opportunities to increase supply. Use of forests and sustainable forest management is a key pillar when developing a European Bioeconomy.

CEPF added that increased forest growth and engagement of forest owners meant that there was further opportunity to use more forest biomass in the EU. Forest owners have been involved in the bioeconomy developments and are eager to be involved. However, at EU level primary producers and the forest sector had been left aside in developments such as the European Bioeconomy Panel. CEPF asked the Commission who had been invited to the Panel and how forest owners were represented there. Furthermore, CEPF asked how producers could contribute to the strategy review and the next Bioeconomy Stakeholders' Conference.

COGECA asked whether the CDG FC considers the Bioeconomy Strategy to be the right way to move away from the fossil-fuel-based society. COGECA reminded those present that we must be careful to ensure that biomass does not become too expensive or too cheap. Attention should be paid to the circular economy and ensuring that it does not replace the bioeconomy.

COPA highlighted the need for a coherent approach between all relevant policies, such as EIP AGRI and EIP RAW MATERIALS, and different DGs. COPA asked the Commission what the main role of the European Bioeconomy Panel was and if the Commission could provide the participants with additional information about the call for experts who would work on the review of the strategy.

ECVC underlined the importance of the origin and content of raw materials. If additional harvesting was needed, its impacts on land should be acknowledged. Concerns were raised if wood residues are not left in the forest as fertilizers. In addition, the origin of energy (waste or biofuels) is important.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission thanked the participants for their input. Regarding the policy coherence, it was noted to be one of the biggest challenges in the bioeconomy dossier. Coherence was one of the key questions for the future bioeconomy policy, but this is not always in the hands of single DGs themselves. The college as a whole shares responsibility for bioeconomy policy coherence and the Commission noted that participants can contact Commissioners and their cabinets to foster policy coherence.

The Commission reminded those present that the bioeconomy is about creating new value chains. It is important to combine sectors that have not worked together.

Regarding biomass availability and price, the Commission said that for industry this should be competitive; however, a decent income for farmers must be ensured.

The Commission noted that the forest sector had not been forgotten at EU level and this can be seen in President Juncker's investments beneficiaries list, for instance. A pulp mill in Äänekoski is on the list and is an important plant to demonstrate the potential of the bioeconomy.

Furthermore, the Commission informed the CDG about the European Bioeconomy Panel. It will consist of 30 experts and a list of names would be made available in a few days. The Commission said that the forest sector was well represented in the Panel with one public authority from Finland, one forest organisation and a forest sector platform. Several organisations would be involved indirectly. The Commission promised to disseminate the list of members as soon as the information was made available to the public.

The Commission reminded the CDG that DG GROW already has an expert advisory group in this field and the Panel is therefore not set up as a platform to advise the Commission what it should or should not do. The Panel should focus on how stakeholders can engage and what they should do to get more value out of the bioeconomy. It should not focus on discussing changes to legislation. The

first step is the European Bioeconomy Stakeholders' Manifesto and then other subjects depend on the stakeholders.

Moreover, the Commission promised to inform the stakeholders about review activities. When the Commission launches the call for experts in September 2016, all those who are interested can apply. The Commission promised to send a notice to DG AGRI so that also the participant of the CDG can also obtain this information. The call aims to get researchers and technical experts to take part in the expert group.

The next Bioeconomy Conference was scheduled to take place in Bratislava on 17th October, and would focus on Central and Eastern regions and be targeted at policy-makers.

In addition, the Commission noted that the Bioeconomy Strategy had been published in 2012 and the Commission services were well aware of the absence of wood construction. A systemic approach is needed and it is vital to include the whole EU. The Commission showed the participants some of the research actions conducted under FP7 and Horizon 2020, including ERA-NETs, to address the woodworking industry.

7. Presentation of the results of the Eurobarometer campaign

TNS gave a presentation of the results of the Eurobarometer campaign. The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

Copa found the presentation very interesting and was not surprised about the national differences. COPA stated that it was very positive to see that 95% of respondents argued that rural areas were important for our future.

EEB was pleased to hear citizens' views and encouraged the Commission to take these into account in their policy making.

CEPF noted that economic aspects were at the bottom, but the forest sector employed more people than the automotive sector, for instance. CEPF thought that the results demonstrated the need to raise awareness about the economic and social aspects of forests. CEPF hoped to see a similar survey for the forest sector, as the present survey had been carried out under the CAP.

ELO would have liked to see questions about forest management and said that if policy makers were going to take these results into account, they should broaden the questions.

The Commission explained that an exclusive report on citizens' views on forestry had been carried out in 2008, which had indicated the need for a Eurobarometer on forests.

COGECA informed the participants about similar, regularly carried out surveys in Austria. It was vital to be cautious when drawing conclusions from these surveys as the importance of forests often only related to protecting nature, which was a more complex issue. Forests needed to be protected, but that did not make it necessary to increase protected areas.

CEPF noted that in similar surveys conducted in Germany for example, citizens did not distinguish between inside and outside of Europe. CEPF agreed with the previous speaker, advocating caution when drawing conclusions, then reminded the group that we all represented citizens.

Answers from TNS

TNS provided the Commission with the results and the Commission decided how to use them. Conclusions were drawn with the Commission and the main focus of this survey was indeed the CAP. TNS shared the group's concerns about drawing conclusions and tried to leave this task to the reader.

500 to 1,000 interviews were carried out in each country for the survey. It was a representative survey and not a consultation. The number of interviews was important and provided a representative view of national opinion.

8. Report on EU Timber Regulation

DG ENVI gave a presentation on the review of EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

EEB asked about the role of each group in the Commission's report to the Parliament and Council and whether there were any significant differences in the implementation.

CEPI thanked the Commission for its presentation and noted that the product scope was not complete, leading to unfair competition in the eyes of the European printing sector. This was very harmful and could lead to situations where investments in manufacturing came from outside the EU. CEPI advocated broadening the product scope to also cover printed products.

WWF thought that the policy should be implemented by all countries and asked the Commission for clarification. WWF called for a quality assessment. Furthermore, penalties and sanctions could be problematic.

ELO asked about the cost-benefit analysis and whether it would be included in the study this year.

EFFAT asked whether it was necessary to expand the scope and whether it was relevant for citizens and the general public.

COPA asked whether forest owners were protected against illegal timber and whether the goals of the legislation were being reached.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission said that contributions to the public consultation on the evaluation of the EUTR two years after its entry into application were available online. Statistics of the replies and Member State reports were also available, as well as the external contractor's report, accompanied by the Commission's quality assessment form. The Commission said that the responses reflected a broad range of views and that the answers differed considerably.

The impact assessment would be launched at the end of the year, when there would be an opportunity to consider other product options.

Hungary and Spain had had some difficulties with their authorities and the problems should be solved mid-June. Romania had also had some issues, which were to be solved anon.

The next review would be conducted in five years. The Commission advocated better coordination between the Member States, hoping to facilitate the exchange of information and work towards better regulation.

Costs were a part of the impact assessment. Two years of implementation experience had proven to be rather limited in some cases. However, the Commission was moving towards eliminating illegally placed timber in the EU.

9. Follow-up on the EU Forest Strategy MAP

DG AGRI gave a presentation on the follow-up of the EU Forest Strategy MAP. The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

EURAF had a suggestion regarding priority 7 on working together to coherently manage and better understand our forests. They noted that the best available resolution on EU forest mapping systems was at 20-40 m, and that insufficient quantification had taken place of small patches of trees on farms. They suggested that better integration could take place between EU forest inventories (e.g. COPERNICUS) and farm-forest data collected through IACS/LPIS, where a resolution of 50 cm is available. The best possible geospatial resolution of land units was needed for national LULUCF reporting, and clarity was needed on which parcels were considered forest and which agriculture in these reports..

CEPF asked whether priority 2 on fostering the competitiveness and sustainability of the EU's forest-based industries, bioenergy and the wider green economy also included a study on the cascading use.

Birdlife asked about priority 2, where a focus group on the sustainable mobilisation of wood was mentioned. Birdlife asked for more information.

CEI-BOIS noted that the CLIMWOOD study was important for LULUCF and asked when it would be published.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission had no specific answer to EURAF's question, but noted that the COPERNICUS system had been recently updated.

The Commission would present the final results of the study on cascading use in due course.

Under the EIP AGRI, there was an open call for experts for a focus group on the sustainable mobilisation of wood in order to choose experts. A list of the experts was available on the EIP AGRI website.

The Commission predicted that the CLIMWOOD study would be published soon.

10. Presentation of findings from forest-related studies

10.1. DG GROW study "The optimised cascading use of wood"

DG GROW presented a study on the optimised cascading use of wood. The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

The Chair thanked the Commission for the presentation and asked for more information on the background of the study and who had initiated the process. The Chair asked about the aim of the study and what the Commission would do with the results.

COPA said that this study would not lead to economic growth in Europe. The efficient use of raw materials was positive and production processes and products should be improved. However, the markets should decide where the raw material flows go and this should not be a question to be solved by the EU. Our resources were competitive and we should remain competitive. If subsidies caused distortions on a certain market, we should look into how we could eliminate or modify those subsidies, but this could not be generalised at EU level.

CEPI thanked the Commission for this useful presentation and mentioned that they were keen to know more about the study. CEPI asked about the climate benefits of different options and wanted to hear more about the reference to carbon storage and substitution, and if the study had also looked into substituting fossil-based products by bio-based goods.

CEI-BOIS asked whether cascading use took the whole life cycle of a product into account or merely the production phase. The study was supposed to increase competitiveness, but now could potentially damage the sector. The real problem was wood availability and the study concentrated on production.

BirdLife noted that the conclusions clearly highlighted the benefits of the material use of wood. BirdLife very much welcomed this kind of policy recommendation. The focus was not on detailed priorities, but rather that existing policies were in line with the results. BirdLife supported eliminating subsidies, especially for bioenergy. Furthermore, BirdLife asked the Commission to clarify its statement on not having a mandate to increase the material use of wood and decrease energy use.

COGECA stated that in the last meeting of the forest-based industries expert group, the Commission had mentioned that the study would be used to develop voluntary guidelines on the cascading use. COGECA asked whether the Commission would move forward with these guidelines. Resource efficiency was a much broader term and the concept of cascading use could contribute to improving resource efficiency. COGECA encouraged the Commission to consider the costs of the industry applying the cascading use principle.

COGECA continued, saying that there were several aspects to consider and that the results should be digested slowly. Raw material flows and wood processing had a huge impact on the whole chain. It could be a good idea to develop a common view on this and timber products. An efficient use of resources implied using the raw material as much as possible. The free market principle was therefore important. It was vital to avoid establishing a hierarchy of raw materials and creating market distortions. COGECA mentioned a link to the Circular Economy Package and dedicating more time to discussing the barriers for bioenergy, such as subsidies for fossil energy sources.

COPA-COGECA thanked the Commission for its presentation and said that it was good to have a definition for the term. The Finnish example showed that, despite the subsidies granted five years

ago for wood for energy purposes, the price of pulpwood continued to decrease. These subsidies therefore had no impact on industrial wood markets.

CEPF reminded the Commission that forest owners managed their forests for high value timber and that forests were always managed sustainably regardless of the end use. It was vital to take regional differences and specificities into account. We should avoid any general conclusions and adopting policies for the whole of the EU.

Answers from the Commission

The initiative had come from the EIP on raw materials, with the aim of increasing knowledge of the value chain. The objective of the study was to understand cascading use and what this meant. The Commission would not have a strong legislative power and the aim was to improve resource efficiency. It was understandable that there was a debate between using wood for energy or material purposes and the Commission did not yet have a political mandate to make changes to the sectors.

The study drew no comparisons between the climate benefits of wood and fossil-based products.

The Commission noted that the study highlighted the importance of sawmills to produce residues. Increased production here would also benefit other industries.

The research publication would be available by the end of next week. Because it was so new, there were as yet no political decisions on what to do next.

The Commission stated that resource efficiency was not necessarily cascading. It made no sense to export wood chips to be used in Germany, as they should be used as bioenergy in Finland. The action plan on the circular economy on 2nd December had stated that it would rather be guidance.

Eliminating barriers would increase costs and would not be technically possible. At the moment, it was also not economically feasible.

10.2. DG ENER study on “Carbon impacts of biomass consumed in the EU: quantitative assessment”

DG ENER presented a study on the carbon impacts of biomass consumed in the EU. The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

BirdLife welcomed the study and the detailed figures therein. The study proved that not all bioenergy was bad, but also revealed that energy savings were not enough. BirdLife asked how the Commission would avoid crossing the red line in terms of bioenergy use and whether ILUC and agricultural crops had been taken into consideration.

CEPF stress that the purpose was to concentrate on biomass and how to move away from fossil based energy systems.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission said that the study should contribute to the ongoing debate. The EC was looking at how forests were included in calculating carbon emissions (LULUCF). ILUC was also considered with forest biomass.

11. List of Invasive Alien Species

DG ENVI gave a presentation on EU Regulation 1143/2014 on Invasive Alien Species. The presentation was available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments

CEPF asked about Article 12 and commented that the emphasis was on ecological consequences, which left economic aspects behind. The Commission should take all three aspects into account – ecological, social and economic. Currently, mainly ecological criteria were being applied.

ELO pointed out that insects caused more harm, which was a problem for landowners as they managed the land. Eradication should not be a target, as this was hopeless in many cases. We should rather concentrate on prevention. Currently, there was no list of future invasions that could spread to Europe. Sometimes, there is too much of a focus on activities that were projected to fail, whereas we could concentrate on prevention.

COGECA asked how often the Commission updated the list. Before constantly updating the list, it may be better to learn from the process and do it less frequently. The Commission had also failed to adopt delegated acts, which should detail the risk assessment. COGECA wondered why delegated acts had not been adopted. We should have a clear idea of how the list is assessed, in a way that also took note of economic aspects.

EURAF mentioned that American Ash could appear on the list and asked how they could react to the list and contribute to the discussions.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission adopted the EU list and the Member States could also adopt national lists. If a Member State limits trade, it must inform the Commission thereof. Regulation 1143/2014 is a part of the EU biodiversity policy, and in the first place addresses species negatively impacting biodiversity or ecosystem services. Economic and human health impacts are taken into account as aggravating factors.

Speed is often paramount for eradication. The costs are quite low if you react quickly, when the species first appears. There is only an eradication obligation for newly establishing IAS. The Commission has invested in a Horizon scanning study, identifying potential future IAS. This study is now being used as a basis to select species for developing risk assessments, as a first step towards listing.

The Regulation includes a provision but no deadline for a delegated act refining the methodology for risk assessments. The Regulation includes a deadline for proposing an implementing act with the first list. The Commission had one year to propose its implementing act. It was thus not possible to first adopt a delegated act and then propose an implementing act within this timeframe. It would neither be necessary, as the methodology is already available in the Regulation (Art 5(1)). It would finally not be beneficial to first adopt a delegated act, as this could better be based on experiences. The Commission is now working on the delegated act, based on the experiences with the first list. In its preparation of the implementing act, the Commission is working in a very transparent way, which can be followed through the website on IAS. Proposals for listing are first going through the Scientific

Forum evaluating the robustness of the risk assessment, and –only after positive opinion of the Scientific Forum- forwarded to the Committee, evaluating the compliance of the proposed species with the criteria for listing. Currently 17 risk assessments are screened by the Scientific Forum, in the process towards the first update of the list.

The American ash has not been considered for listing.

12. AOB

The Chair thanked the participants and speakers for their active and valuable contributions, then thanked the Secretariat and interpreters. The Chair invited the participants of the next meeting to the voluntary, informal reception at the European Forestry House the evening beforehand. The next CDG on Forestry and Cork would be held on 2nd December 2016.

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."
