

Brussels, 18/12/2018
agri.ddg3.i.4(2018)7320917

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group Rural Development

Date: 26/10/2018

Chair: Mr Peter PASCHER

Organisations present: all organisations were present, except ECPA, EFNCP, Fooddrink, PREPARE, UEAPME.

1. Approval of the agenda (and of the minutes of the previous meeting¹)

The agenda was approved and the minutes of the previous meeting (6/7/2018) were adopted by written procedure before the meeting.

ELARD put forward a point under AOB regarding a meeting in China held with the authorities and an event that would take place in Portugal.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

3.1 Elections of the Chair and Vice-Chairs

The European Commission explained the election procedure and presented the candidacies that they had received. The three candidates – Mr Peter Pascher (Copa) for the position of Chair, Mr Dominique Fayel (Euromontana) for the position of Vice-Chair and Ms Harriet Bradley (BirdLife Europe) for the position of Vice-Chair – were invited to introduce themselves. Following this, the group proceeded with the elections. There were four abstentions for Mr Pascher, one abstention for Mr Dominique Fayel and two abstentions for Ms Harriet Bradley. The new chairmanship was congratulated upon their election.

3.2 CAP Strategic Plans: What will the CAP Strategic Plans look like?

¹ If not adopted by written procedure (CIRCABC)

The Commission gave a presentation on the CAP strategic plans based on the Commission proposal, which was made available on CIRCABC. The presentation highlighted what the CAP strategic plans would look like in practical terms. The Commission mentioned that a draft implementing act with the template would be published after the adoption of the CAP proposal.

Questions from the members

BirdLife asked how flexible the Commission was on the partial approval of the CAP strategic plans. They stressed that there were elements within the strategic plan that would not be approved such as the annex on the stakeholder consultation. In addition to this, they emphasised that the role of the monitoring committee was mentioned in several articles and that it would need to be correctly addressed by the Commission. They also asked what the deadline would be for submitting the CAP strategic plans.

WWF asked what would happen if, based on one of the annexes, it was shown that MS had conducted a poor consultation among stakeholders. Would the Commission have enough tools to ask MS to go back to the stakeholders in order to hold a proper consultation?

CEPF welcomed the specific forestry and bioeconomy objective. In addition, they commented on the requirement for forest management plans and the fact that, compared to existing rules, there was no reference to the holding size. They underlined that simplification was crucial for beneficiaries.

ECVC asked about the timing of the negotiations and insisted that it would be necessary to know if there could be a regulation for the transition period for the implementation of the new CAP. In addition, they asked to what extent this would compromise the financing issue. Would it mean old rules and less money? They also had a question on the definition of genuine farmers and whether or not it was mandatory. The last point was on simplification and how this would benefit farmers, who would still have to fill in a lot of paperwork.

Euromontana stressed that the existing policy was not guaranteeing communality as ambition levels varied from one MS to another and very few MS would take risks due to that fact that the system was new. Moreover, they asked how each MS's strategy would tie in with the regions. Was the Commission also planning to discuss this with the regions?

Copa highlighted that it was already difficult for farmers to implement the CAP due to the administrative burden and lack of simplification. They asked how MS and farmers would deal with this new and seemingly complicated plan. In addition, they asked about the transition period as well as the eco-schemes and their link to the second pillar – how would this be managed?

EURAF welcomed the new CAP architecture and the greater focus on advisory support (very important notably for young farmers). They also mentioned that a distinction between non-productive and productive landscape features would need to be made. They also called for forestry to be included in the CAP strategic plans – agro-forestry was an important tool that had not featured in the existing programming.

IFOAM asked about the regional dimension of the eco-schemes. Would it only be possible to have them in some regions? Moreover, they asked about conditionality and

additional measures – how would this link between conditionality, AECMs and eco-schemes be explained?

EEB mentioned that it was not only the satellites that would provide jobs in rural areas. Animal welfare would need to be included in the future CAP strategic plans. How the inclusion of the animal welfare would be checked and how important would this be?

Answers from the Commission

The two funds would be implemented under a single CAP Strategic Plan, subject to common rules. The Commission mentioned that partial approval would be possible only if this is duly justified and if indicative targets and the financial plans are submitted. This legal possibility is not meant to result in a systematic split between the two pillars or between regional and national levels.

With regards to partnership, MS were required to consult stakeholders in the drafting of the CAP plans and to provide information on this approach in the annex of CAP Strategic Plans. The Commission underline that this is a legal requirement and that failure to involve stakeholders would represent a breach of legal requirements which will not be accepted.

With regards to the forest owners' question, in line with the new delivery model, the Commission did not propose eligibility criteria such as related to the size of the holding. Furthermore, the Commission underlined that EU support complements national support. As for the later, EU legislation cannot prescribe how Member States should address national actions on forestry.

With regards to the transition period, the Commission stated that this is not the right time to start respective reflections. Appropriate steps would be taken once it is time to act. In any case, there will be a proper step from one programming period to another.

The definition of genuine farmer pursues to better target CAP support.

For simplification, the main effects are expected from leaving the application of detailed rules to Member States and moving to a simplified approach of clearance, based on output rather than compliance at the level of individual transactions. Furthermore, new rules on applying for support (click and go) would follow similar approach as pursued by the simplification elements already in place. Nevertheless, a minimum level of requirements is unavoidable to ensure the proper implementation of the policy in line with the Financial Regulation.

For the new green architecture and eco-schemes, minimum spending is limited to EAFRD (30% for environment and climate action). Beyond this, no minimum spending is foreseen.

With regards to communality, the new CAP plan have to be established on the basis of both the identification of needs on the ground and the CAP specific objectives. Interventions and allocations have to be plausible in the light of these parameters and the approval process would have to play a crucial role in ensuring consistency.

Concerning the regional aspects, MS have the possibility to delegate responsibilities to the regional level and the CAP Strategic Plans may well differentiate the implementation of certain interventions, including eco schemes, at the level of regions. This flexibility

has also been underlined in the discussion between the Commission and the national authorities. In any case, the legal proposal provides for a single interlocutor per Member State which implies in total 27 CAP strategic plans.

The policy would have to deliver on the nine common objectives.

The content of the CAP strategic plans would have to be followed in the implementation. There is a strong framework foreseen for the approval of the CAP strategic plans, and the Commission would follow its implementation, in close cooperation with Member States, in order to manage implementation of the approved interventions in line with the plans.

Territorial aspects would be maintained and the eighth objective is deemed to be important in this context as well as the opportunities that it offered. The Commission underlined that the EAFRD was the only fund for which the legal framework foresees a minimum spending for LEADER. Furthermore, the Commission proposal foresees a single set of rules for LEADER which forms part of the CPR. In this respect, the CAP legal framework makes cross references to the CPR, as it does also for Financial Instruments and some general provisions. Beyond this, the Commission considered that any further incorporation of RD into the CPR was not very helpful. Other than sometimes argued, it would not strengthen RD but rather make its management more cumbersome. In any case, RD acts in complementarity to other funds, which must be spelled out in CAP Strategic Plans and, apart from this, it would anyhow be necessary that other funds engage in rural areas.

The Commission mentioned that DG AGRI had set up national hubs that were small entities aimed at providing support and advice to the MS in order to prepare the CAP strategic plans.

The deadline to submit the CAP strategic plans would be 1st January 2020.

3.3 Networking under the future CAP: stakeholders' needs and inputs

The Commission gave a presentation on networking under the future CAP, which was made available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

Copa highlighted the fact that a key objective of the future networking proposals was to ensure full coherence of different EU networking activities and it was not clear how this would be guaranteed. Would the future legal framework ensure one single and new network at EU level? They also stressed that there needed to be one single EU multifunctional contact point for networking under the CAP. They also mentioned that the networks were foreseen to be financed only from RD technical assistance funds. What about first pillar support for technical assistance?

BirdLife mentioned that the Steering Group of the rural networks had held a discussion on this topic. They asked how this discussion was linked to other meetings and consultation processes such as the current 13 CDGs. They also asked how the CDG's were funded and how the different bodies would be interlinked. They underlined that the governance of the new CAP network would also have to integrate Pillar I. They also requested more information as to how the monitoring committees would collaborate with the national CAP networks, and how LEADER would be addressed.

EuroGites commented that, similar to other non-agriculture members of the CDG like UEAPME, they have no expertise on issues of Pillar 1 and will not be able to contribute in related topics. What will happen with this situation.

Euromontana asked about the governance of the new network.

RED underlined that the governance discussion was not yet on the table. They also stressed that the budget mattered. If the Commission reduced the number of CDG or network meetings or limit the number of participants, as it considered had been case for the current Steering Group, due to budgetary reasons, this would not be a good solution, as stakeholders would need to continue to be present to debate these important topics. They also stated that restrictions would not help if it was a holistic approach that they wanted.

COGECA highlighted that it considered COM proposal to have a new single and holistic networking structure to follow the single CAP Strategic Plans logical. It called for a more streamlined system and to have more efficient meetings.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission confirmed that the legal proposals foresee a single EU-level network, plus single national-level CAP networks. As regards activities, the Commission would like the networks, which currently cover only Pillar II, to cover in future the full breadth of the CAP Strategic Plans. They should look at all types of intervention from both Pillars and how they can best deliver the objectives of the Plans, as well as continuing existing well-established networking activities for example on LEADER and innovation. The Commission also highlighted that there were elements, such as the future governance arrangements for the new EU-level CAP Network, that fell outside the legal proposal and upon which the Commission was still reflecting. The Commission wanted to have networks that worked for stakeholders and invited input on their needs and on their views on future governance arrangements.

Regarding the link between the networks and the CDG, the Commission confirmed they were established under different legal provisions which set out their respective objectives. As regards the CDG's, the Commission reported that the procurement procedures had been launched for a study on the analysis of the CDG. The study would be conducted in 2019 and the results of the study would be presented, and would be an input for any restructuring of the CDG in light of the CAP reform. The existing CDG structure would be valid until 2021.

The CDGs' budget line differed from that of the networks².

With regards to the link of national networks with the monitoring committees in the MS, their roles were very different. The monitoring committee played an institutional role in the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans.

The Commission confirmed that the networks would continue to cover rural activities such as LEADER and would have a lot of scope to adjust their activities to the interests of stakeholders, and the new challenge would be how to also include Pillar I.

² The Commission can confirm that the costs for the CDGs are financed from a Commission administrative budget line, while the Networks are financed from EAFRD technical assistance.

As regards the remarks on limitation of membership when establishing the current Rural Networks Steering Group, the Commission mentioned that this had not been due to budgetary constraints but rather the desire to have a more operational size body to prepare the work of the much larger Assembly. The challenge for the future EU CAP Network would be to establish governance structures that were both inclusive and operational. The Commission also agreed that possibilities to streamline and to increase effectiveness of existing structures needed to be explored.

The Commission would not prescribe how the MS were to organise the details of MC and National CAP Network structures.

As regards financing, the Commission confirmed that networking was funded as one part of RD technical assistance only, where some Member States had indicated that perhaps 4% was not sufficient. This had been a policy choice when preparing the Commission's proposals. The budget available for interventions under Pillar I would need to be reduced if more money was required for technical assistance

3.4 Proper financing for future rural development

a. Rural 3.0 OECD study

The OECD study was presented and the presentation was made available on CIRCABC.

Questions and comments from the members

RED stressed the importance of the diversity of rural territories and the need for a rural-urban link. They called for a European Rural Agenda, something that the EP was also requesting. This would be integrated in the new regulation on the CAP. The Commission would have to take into account the EP position.

Euromontana mentioned that they were continuing see these differences between rural and urban areas on a day-to-day basis. They deemed distance as well as road networks to be very important. In the local decision-making process, politicians tended to respond to population meaning that they tended to focus on areas that were more densely populated.

Copa also underlined the need to improve the situation in areas facing difficulties, including mountainous areas. The main issue lay in attracting the youth into these areas and for this, micro-solutions were needed.

Answers from the OECD

Principles for rural and urban areas would be developed together, converged and then translated into recommendations. Understanding settlement was important and it was necessary to look into how to attract people into rural areas, how to make rural areas more attractive through using technology.

b. Implementing the Cork Declaration

The Commission gave a presentation on the implementation of the Cork Declaration, which was made available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

Copa stressed that there was a lack of consistency between the CAP and Cohesion Policy in the proposal for the future policies. The Cork Declaration was an excellent document but was not taken into account in the preparation process of the future policies. They also stressed that we needed to stop thinking in silos.

WWF stated that the spirit of the Cork declaration had been extinguished by the CAP budget proposal and that a first pillar with more diverse instruments that also contributed to rural development was needed.

Cogeca drew the group's attention to the issues related to innovation, how LEADER was working and coherence with other funds.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission stated that the fact that RD will no longer feature in CPR does not mean that it will be completely disconnected from other policies. RD will still contribute to the objective of territorial cohesion. The MS will have to explain in their plans through which mechanisms coordination with other Funds will be ensured, in view of maximising synergies.

As regards the current period, matters are also in the hands of the MS and it is up to them to choose the best combination of tools between different policies. Different forms of support provided the opportunity to work towards improving coordination and ensuring synergies that helped rural development.

The Commission reminded the overall framework under which budgetary cuts for Cohesion and CAP policies had to be proposed, notably with reference to new emerging challenges (security, migration, etc.) and BREXIT. The proposed increase in national co-financing rates aims at mitigating the effects of the cuts as regards the overall public expenditure for rural development.

c. State of play of the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) in relation to the CAP

The Commission gave a presentation on the state of play of the PAF in relation to the CAP, which was made available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

WWF asked what the Commission expected from the MS and if the Commission thought that MS would include a lot of details in the PAF. They asked if the Ministry of Environment knew what measures could be covered from Pillar I and Pillar II.

BirdLife stressed that this session was also meant to show the need for a strong Pillar 2 budget and different arguments. For example also for nature, funding would need to come from the CAP. Therefore we wanted to ask: What role would the PAF play in the SWOT analysis? Eurogites underlined that N2000 was a beautiful brand, but that it needed to be made more profitable. This had not yet been achieved and we were forgetting to give taxpayers something in return for their contributions.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission had made extensive workshops and guidance services available to MS to foster a more focused approach.

The Commission had asked for numerous details and this could be seen as an administrative burden.

PAF was an important tool that would be used for the SWOT analysis and various articles such as Article 96 and Article 97.

Regarding the profitability of N2000, the Commission mentioned that the EU had high-quality recreation water for tourism purposes as well as pollination and wished to point out that it was not only for conservation.

3.4 Horizon Europe: key elements in the new legislative proposals

The Commission gave a presentation on the state of play of Horizon Europe, which was made available on CIRCABC.

EuropaBio mentioned that there was a new EU Bioeconomy strategy and that there had been a workshop organised by DG Agri on this topic, during which some important steps were made. The Bioeconomy was also deemed to be important in the context of the circular economy and biodiversity. They called for a more in-depth discussion on the bioeconomy in the next CDG.

WWF asked about the Council and EP debate on this matter. What was their reaction and when would the first calls be published?

Answers from the Commission

The Commission mentioned that they were working on the bioeconomy and that it should bring benefits to rural areas as a whole. They underlined that sustainability was an important aspect that needed to be addressed. The Commission had also organised an EIP seminar on the topic in 2015.

Most elements were received positively by the EP and the Council. The first calls would be published end of 2020 / beginning of 2021.

The Commission was planning to consult stakeholders in the second quarter of 2019 and wanted to use the CDG on RD to get feedback from them.

3.5 European Solidarity Corps: state of play and calls

The Commission gave a presentation on the European Solidarity Corps, which was made available on CIRCABC.

Comments from the members

CEJA mentioned that they could not access some important documents on the website. It seemed that the website was not working properly.

BirdLife welcomed the initiative and believed it was essential to have young people involved in these kinds of actions.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission mentioned that the website glitch was only temporary and that it would soon be back up and running. They also gave a good example of positive collaboration between several countries on this topic (such as Spain and Portugal).

3.6 Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills

The Commission gave a presentation on the new call for the ‘Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills’ that, this year, includes “Bio-economy, new technologies & innovation in agriculture” as eligible sector. The presentation was made available on CIRCABC.

The Commission stressed that all criteria, relevance of the proposal, the composition of the applying partnership, the quality of the work plan and dissemination and sustainability arrangements, were important. Sector Skills Alliances implementing the Blueprint shall gather skills intelligence, develop a sector skills strategy, review occupational profiles and develop and deliver related curricula.

Comments from the members

Eurogites mentioned that they were already partners in the Alliance implementing the Blueprint in tourism and that it was a very interesting and flexible project that helped to look forward and find new solutions. They encouraged the CDG members to take a look at it.

CEJA stated that they were involved in many projects related to skills and that they were without a doubt interested in participating.

COPA welcomed this important initiative for the sector and, together with other relevant stakeholders, hoped to contribute to developing a proposal for the implementation of the Blueprint in the relevant sector.

3.7 Suggested items for the next Civil Dialogue Group

EuropaBio and CEPF suggested that a point on the new EU Bioeconomy strategy and its implementation should feature on the agenda of the next meeting.

3.8 AOB

ELARD presented the outcomes of their meeting with the Chinese authorities responsible for the revision of their rural development policy. They also presented the event that would be held in Portugal.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The Chair concluded that the following points would be further discussed in the next meeting: the future CAP proposal and the CAP strategic plans, the future of the rural networks, the future research policy.

Members were invited to submit any suggested items to be discussed in the next CDG on Rural Development in writing to the Chair (oana.neagu@copa-cogeca.eu).

5. Next steps

The CAP, Horizon Europe and Cohesion policy legislative proposals would continue to be discussed at Council and EP level over the next period.

The Rural Network's Assembly would be held on the 11th December 2018.

Guidance

This part of the minutes should provide comprehensive information on next steps, as agreed during the meeting, including on the issues to be discussed in future meetings, the tasks to be performed by the group and the general timeline.

6. Next meeting

Upon the proposal of the Chair, the members of the CDG agreed to ask the Commission to organise the next meeting in February 2019 at the latest.

7. List of participants - Annex

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."

List of participants – Minutes
Civil Dialogue Group Rural Development
Date: 26/10/2018

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NAME	FIRST NAME
Association des régions européennes des produits d'origine (AREPO)	SCAGLIONI	Giulia
Association for the European Rural Universities (APURE)	JEAN-CLAUDE	Gaullet
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	KOCH	Hélène
Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers (CEETAR)	ROCHE	Jérôme
Euromontana (Euromontana)	FAYEL	Dominique
EuropaBio	CHAUVET	Jean-Marie
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	WORMS	Patrick
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	SILVA	Pablo
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	SANTOS	Pedro
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	FÉNIX	Tomáš Ignác
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	LLORENS	Maria
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	PRESCHER	Andre
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	VONESCH	Anne
European Federation of Rural Tourism (Eurogites)	EHRlich	Klaus
European Fur Breeders' Association (Fur Europe)	GONO	Adam
European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD)	LUND	Kirsten Birke
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	PADOURKOVA	Adela
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	THERIAGA MENDES BERNARDO GONÇALVES DE SILVA PINTO	Cláudia
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	ROUSSEAU	Gilles

European Milk Board (EMB)	VAN KEIMPEMA	Jantje Sieta
European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA)	NILSSON	Staffan
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	FARGIONE	Riccardo
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	ATS	Kerli
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	LUNDKVIST	Lars-Erik
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	ULRICH	Jan
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	BARŠVÁRY	Ján
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	DZELZKALĒJA-BURMISTRE	Maira
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	DRYGAS	Mirosław
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	HODALIC	Tomislava
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	OLJEMARK	Kaius
European farmers (COPA)	MASTROGIOVANNI	Domenico
European farmers (COPA)	JAUMOTTE	Isabelle
European farmers (COPA)	PASCHER	Peter
European farmers (COPA)	LAPPALAINEN	Juha
European farmers (COPA)	CARO CALVO	Antonio
European farmers (COPA)	FRANCIS	Andrew
European farmers (COPA)	BRADY	Joe
European farmers (COPA)	THURNER	Andreas
European farmers (COPA)	NEAGU	Oana
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	DE LA VEGA	Nicolas
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	BARBOSA	Barbara

Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	SLABE	Anamarija
Ruralité-Environnement-Développement (RED)	PELTRE	Gérard
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	JORDANA	Ines
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	ROBIJNS	Trees
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	BRADLEY	Harriet
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	DAN	Raluca
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	RUIZ	Jabier
Jose Enrique GARCILAZO CORREDERA	GARZILAZO	Jose Enrique
TOTAL:		49