

MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP ON ARABLE CROPS ON 12TH DECEMBER 2014

The Civil Dialogue Group met, presided by Mr Jean-François ISAMBERT, the Chairman of the Civil Dialogue Group on Arable Crops. The agenda and the minutes of the meetings of the Advisory Groups on Flax and Hemp on 7th October 2013 and the Advisory Group on Cotton on 6th December 2013 were approved by the members.

COP

1 – Update on the market situation

A representative from CELCAA presented the market situation and highlighted the problem of the volume of carry-over into the next marketing year, the quality of the wheat and the EU's import situation as a net importer of bread wheat. The development of the markets will also depend on the geopolitical situation in Russia-Ukraine. A representative of the European Commission outlined the situation on the world and European markets for cereals, oilseeds and protein crops. A representative from Copa stressed that the maize harvest had only just been completed and it was still difficult to determine whether the maize was of uniform quality. The bumper harvest should ensure a good availability of raw materials for livestock producers.

2 – Prospects for the cereals and oilseeds markets towards 2024

A representative from DG AGRI presented the results of the statistical models as well as the uncertainties on which the hypotheses were founded. The representative from the European Environmental Bureau highlighted the risk of increased production of cereals, the weakness of market regulatory tools and the impact of atmospheric disturbances. A representative from Cogeca underlined that the increase in production was linked to efforts to raise productivity and guaranteed the competitiveness of European livestock production. A representative from Copa underscored the need for transparency on the European fertilisers market.

3 – Neonicotinoids

A representative from Copa presented the first impacts that stopping seed treatment had had for oilseeds. Potential yields were already 10% to 30% lower, depending on the area, and farmers were less likely to sow spring oilseeds and asked DG Agri to study the possible impact on the agricultural markets. A representative from CEPM highlighted the same problems. A representative from Beelife stated that agricultural insurance could cover the cost of damages and that alternative practices existed. The representative from DG AGRI invited producers to continue their analyses. The Chair of the meeting stressed that DG AGRI should contribute to this study to better analyse the economic impacts and the market impacts.

The representative of Beelife questioned the yield losses claimed since they were not supported by the data shown by Commission, Copa-Cogeca and Coceral in points 1 and 2 of the agenda. Copa representative explained that in 2014 neonicotinoid-treated seeds had still been sown.

4 – Plant protein "Scoreboard"

A representative from CELCAA presented the methodology that had been followed to establish an overview of the sources which supply plant protein to the EU. A representative from the European Environmental Bureau highlighted the public support for the production of plant protein. A representative from EURAF stressed that production of protein derived from insects should be examined. A representative from Beelife was interested in developing an environment module.

6 – Study on storage capacity and infrastructures

A representative from Rabobank presented the results of the study carried out jointly with Copa-Cogeca which analysed investments in terms of both quality and quantity.

7 – Ethanol "Scoreboard"

A representative from the Commission informed participants why DG AGRI no longer wanted to draw up a balance sheet for ethanol production. The representatives from Copa, Cogeca, CEPM, and FoodDrinkEurope were opposed to this information being scrapped. The representative from Celcaa wanted the data collected by DG TAXUD to be more up to date. The Chair of the meeting concluded that the information contained in this ethanol balance sheet was still of use to operators and that the possibility of improving the information collected by customs services should be examined.

FLAX AND HEMP

A representative of flax producers and a representative of hemp processors presented the historical background of the sectors and the issues they were facing. The flax sector wanted the sector to be more organised, there to be greater market transparency and for better clarification of how private storage works. The hemp sector wanted to be recognised as a crop which is permitted in ecological focus areas. The representative from DG Agri underlined the fact that transparency can have a negative effect on the flax market, and that the Commission services were working on the delegated act for the functioning of private storage. The Commission Services underscored the fact that structuring the sectors must remain a priority for the European Commission.

COTTON

- 1- A representative from the Commission and from Celcaa presented the prospects for production in Europe and the development of world markets, as well as China's position concerning possible manipulation of market prices.
- 2- The consultancy firm which carried out the assessment study on the previous reform presented its draft report. The representatives from Copa highlighted the fact that some elements needed to be changed. The Chair of the meeting proposed that the members of the Civil Dialogue Group send their comments to the Commission in writing.
- 3- A representative from DG Enterprise presented the opportunities afforded by legislation of products of EU origin. A representative of FoodDrinkEurope presented the project on labelling of European cotton production in order to showcase the quality of this production. The representative from Celcaa stressed that although the idea was interesting, it had to be easily understandable to consumers and feasible for the actors of the sector. The representatives from Copa supported this initiative. The Chair of the meeting invited the members of the Civil Dialogue Group to continue thinking about

this initiative and to draft a concrete proposal to be presented to the Commission to examine the possibility of Community support.

The agenda was completed and the Chair of the meeting closed the session.

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."