

Brussels, 20/12/2017

MINUTES FOR WRITTEN PROCEDURE

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Groups Quality and Promotion

Date: 15/12/2017

Chair: Mr Romain COOLS (SACAR)

Organisations present: All Organisations were present except BEUC, EFNCP, EEB/BEE, EPHA, FOEE and WWF.

1. Approval of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting (30/06/2017) were approved without amendments.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the CDG on Quality and Promotion:

The Commission announced the elections taking place for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chairs of the group.

There were three candidates, namely:

- Mr Romain COOLS (SACAR, BE) candidate to the position of Chairman for a second mandate
- Mrs Laura MARLEY (FoodDrinkEurope, FR) candidate to the position of Vice-Chair for a first mandate
- Mr Giulio BENVENUTI (COGECA, IT) candidate to the position of Vice-Chair for a second mandate

The candidates briefly introduced themselves. The group decided to vote by a show of hands. Mr Cools was elected with the support of all the participants, except one abstention of ECVC.

Mrs Marley and Mr Benvenuti were also elected with the support of all the participants, except two abstentions from EMB and ECVC.

QUALITY

1. Feedback on the state of play of the planned evaluation of marketing standards, by Mrs Agnieszka Gogolewska (AGRI C4)

The COM Representative explained the state of play concerning the planned evaluation of marketing standards. An evaluation Roadmap was developed defying the purpose, and scope of the evaluation. It was published during summer for comments of Stakeholders and 18 contributions were received in this process.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine to what extent the EU marketing standards for food products are delivering to achieve the fixed objectives and are useful in this sense for the stakeholders (consumers, producers, traders, packers, retailers). The evaluation will assess the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value of the marketing standards.

The work on the evaluation should start at the beginning of 2018.

Questions and answers:

Several questions were asked regarding the Communication from the Commission by the different organisations concerning next steps. More information was also requested concerning the scope and issues to be analysed.

The Commission Representative explained that in order to participate in the open consultation, a registration in the Transparency Register is needed. It is available under the following link: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/notifications/homePage.do?locale=en> Registered stakeholders are automatically notified once a public consultation is put online. The Transparency Register concerns organizations and not individual citizens.

The evaluation will look at how the different standards performed since they were established, their effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value. The purpose of the evaluation is not to propose changes to the current system but to perform an evaluation of the concerned legal acts.

It was also reminded the importance of marketing standards to establish a common language and minimum standards regarding quality to establish a level playing field. Marketing standards are often mentioned as a reason on food waste and they do not generate any so, it was asked whether the Commission was planning to see any possible link with food waste.

The link between the evaluation and the setting up of the French nutritional labelling system Nutri-Score was also asked as well as the need to look at misleading labelling provisions.

The COM representative explained that the main objective of the evaluation would be to look at the general efficiency, effectiveness and added value of marketing standards. More detailed aspects may be looked at.

2. On-going legislative developments in the area of quality policy, by Mrs Tome and Mrs Iusco

The COM Representative provided an update on the on-going work in the area of Geographical Indications for Spirit Drinks.

The objective of this exercise is to adapt Spirits legislation to the Lisbon Treaty. The proposal was adopted by the Commission in December 2016 and then sent to Council and Parliament.

At Council level several meetings took place under Maltese and Estonian Presidencies. Nevertheless, the position is not yet finalized since Member States need more time in order to allow consultation with the sector. On 4 December there was the last meeting of the SCA and the work will continue during the Bulgarian Presidency. The part of the text linked to Geographical Indications is fairly advanced

In the case of the European Parliament, COM-ENVI is leading the discussions with an opinion from COM-AGRI and an opinion from COM-INTA. COM-ENVI will probably vote its opinion in January or February, followed by the vote in Plenary.

Once both institutions have their position, the discussion in "trilogies" are expected for March-April.

Questions and answers:

It was asked whether previous works to simplify quality policy were integrated in the text, if spirits were going to be dealt with in a similar way than wine and food. It was also asked if the text was integrating some provisions regarding the production method.

The Commission indeed explained that one of the main objectives of this exercise was to ensure an alignment with food and wine as much as possible, mainly on the procedure.

Regarding wine:

The COM Representative explained that the last update regarding the preparation of the delegated and implementing acts on wine geographical indications was given to the Civil Dialogue Group on Wine on 10 October. There was also an expert group and a committee with Member States on 27 November. It was also underlined the request received from the sector and several Member States that the Commission should do the scrutiny within 6 months.

It was explained that the last possibility for the Member States to give written comments to the draft texts was on 13 December. The idea would be now to close discussions on the text at the end of January. Following this, there will be a public consultation, TBT notification and once adopted, the text will be sent to the European Parliament and Council for scrutiny that will have two months.

Questions and answers:

Several participants thanked the Commission and called for the inclusion of the deadline to grant more certainty to operators. Indeed, the Commission recognised that they were seriously considering the option.

The Commission also explained their efforts to harmonise whenever possible (without going against the basic act). For instance, to align the administrative procedures as much as possible with food, while aiming to achieve simplification.

For food, the legislation is quite new. Then, in the case of spirits, the Commission has introduced in its proposal for a new Spirit Drinks Regulation similar procedures for registration and amendments as in the case of food. Finally, for wine, in the draft text of the Delegated act, the scope of minor amendments was enlarged and Member States will have the power to approve them.

It was also asked whether the draft wine acts are addressing provisions regarding production and the Commission representative explained that they were only dealing with the section on Geographical Indications and the Wine Unit with the labelling and traditional terms' provisions.

3. Implementation of Regulation No 1169/2011 on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers, by Mrs Magdalena Haponiuk (SANTE E1):

a) Update and discussion on the Implementing Regulation on Art 26.3 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 e.g. scope (“Trademarks”, “Made in”, EU quality schemes), varying origin cases and presentation requirements:

The Commission Representative explained that the InterService consultation with the latest draft was already launched. The difficulty of the discussions was also raised since this is a very sensitive topic for all stakeholders and Member States.

The Commission is trying to find a common position between the different services and they hope that still before Christmas the draft can still be published for the feedback mechanism which will be launched during 4 weeks for people to make comments.

Following the legal obligation laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, the Commission is required to adopt implementing rules on the way the information about the origin of the primary ingredient is to be provided. It was reminded that the scope of the implementing rules is clearly framed by the basic act.

Questions and answers:

A representative asked for more information regarding the interconnection between Geographical Indications and the origin indication and the Commission explained that no more details could be explained at this moment.

Many representatives stressed the need to avoid misleading information and origin indications that have nothing to see with farmers since the objective of this implementing act was to avoid these practices. It was also stressed the need to avoid situations referring to origin when the operators do not have a clear picture on the origin of the primary ingredient, in particular to avoid counterfeiting.

A representative also raised the need to grant some flexibility for operators that want to claim the place of production or processing.

The Commission concluded that the process was delayed because there were some objections to the text. Indeed, it was considered the need to integrate more transparency in the text.

Depending on the outcome, the text will then go to PAFF Committee for discussion and vote.

b) State of play of discussions on recent national developments on mandatory COOL and the next steps:

Several Member States notified to the Commission Services national developments in the area of origin labelling. The Commission did not oppose some of these national schemes such as the one on milk in France, Italy, Portugal, Finland, Lithuania, Greece or Spain.

After the validity period of the national schemes, the Commission will evaluate their functioning and impact. In this regard, Member States committed themselves to prepare a report analysing the impact of these measures on the Internal Market. For example, France is already preparing the terms of reference for the Study.

Questions and answers:

One of the experts asked for more information on the notification from Finland on meat and fish in gastronomy and the risk of nationalism was also raised.

Several experts also reiterated their request for more transparency towards consumers.

The Commission reminded their willingness to be involved in setting up criteria on which the analysis of the national schemes of the Member States in question will be based. The Commission also retained its position in favour of voluntary but it also recognized that during the discussion on the FIC, Member States were already divided on the matter. The group was informed that the deadline for the Commission to react on the Finish notification on gastronomy was mid-February.

The national laws are limited in time, but they will not finish at the same time. The French one will be the first one to finish by end of December 2018. It was also reminded the need to look at the interaction between the implementing act on Article 26.3 and national legislations on origin indication since some of the national developments are linked to the lack of action on Article 26.3 (Italy, Finland, Portugal and Spain).

c) Vegan and Vegetarian products: use of meat quality labels or traditional terms by vegan and vegetarian products:

The Commission Representative (DG SANTE) explained that currently, there are not specific rules at EU level on the matter and therefore, the general Union rules related to voluntary information apply. However, Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 requires the Commission to adopt implementing rules on the information related to sustainability of a food for vegetarians and vegans in order to avoid that this information is ambiguous, misleading or confusing for the consumer. It was also underlined that, under current EU rules, any information provided to consumers cannot be misleading and national authorities of the Member States have to control it.

The recent ruling from the Court of Justice was also raised as a case that gave some indications to Member States.

Many participants raised the need to act on this topic and the importance of defining general principles on the use of names of products of animal origin by plant based products. There is a high risk that consumers are misled about nutritional properties, for example meat and meat based products.

The European Commission should look at this topic since there is a legal vacuum and everything is left up to individual Member States. We are talking about products of a completely different nutrient profile and it is indeed necessary to ensure more transparency and clear rules on marketing standards to have a level playing field.

It was also raised that Member States need to raise it more to bring it to the political agenda.

It was indeed concluded by unanimity of the group the need to avoid misleading practices with the use of names of products of animal origin by plant-based products.

A number of delegates urged DG AGRI to draft marketing standards for meat products such as in the dairy sector.

4. State of play of the delegated and implementing acts of the European Regulation on official controls.

A written contribution was sent to the group providing an update on the recent developments in the area of official controls towards its future implementation.

PROMOTION

1. Implementation of the EU Promotion Policy, by M. JERICIJO (AGRI B1) and A. MECILOSEK (CHAFEA D.)

SIMPLE PROGRAMMES

COM explained that 189 applications were received in 2017 (a bit lower than the year before) corresponding to 3 times the available budget. Interest was greatest for topics 2 and 1, both Internal Market (IM).

IT, EL and FR were the most active in terms of no. of applications submitted, while 5 MS (EE, FI, LU, MT and SK) did not submit any applications.

Meat and dairy applied for more than 40% of the requested budget, due to the specific topics. 'Mixed products' proposals were also numerous due to the required basket approach for wine.

The ranking list, established in the evaluation of proposals, has been entirely integrated in the COM implementing decision of 19 October 2017. After the notification of the COM implementing decision, selected programmes must be signed within 90 days (i.e. by 18 January 2018, midnight) or apply for/get the authorisation from COM to prolong the period. After 90 days, MS informs COM if any contract has not been signed, so that amounts can be reallocated to the reserve list.

Out of the 189 proposals, 52 were selected and 9 put on the reserve list.

Since the crisis call was not published, the corresponding budget has been allocated to topic 7 of the simple call according to the AWP.

FR has 17 proposals approved out of 52 and ES 10 out of 16. IT and EL performed relatively poorly despite the high no. of applications.

Questions/comments raised:

A small dairy coop submitted an application but it was ineligible. It is very disappointing to get 2 lines as an answer.

More transparency is desirable, in terms of the overall scores of the proposals and the details/breakdown of the product category. For example, f&v stats should show fresh and processed f&v because problems are different.

The fact that FR and ES have got a big chunk of the budget seems unbalanced. Would it be possible to set a strategy to rebalance funds among MS?

AGRI/CHAFEA replied that the applicant should look at the eligibility requirements. If the proposing org is not eligible (which includes the representativeness criterion, I.e. 50% market share), then it's not worth applying. CHAFEA has made an eligibility checker available.

Every applicant receives the evaluation report with its own score. The summary report is confidential. Applicants are free to share their own report.

MULTI PROGRAMMES

CHAFEA presented stats showing that, in terms of applications, the biggest interest was for topic C; FR was leading the list of coordinator MS but several MS applied; the type of proposing org was mostly trade and inter-trade orgs; proposals were targeting mostly IM; 20% proposals were for 'basket of products'.

Following the evaluation, 9 proposals were accepted and 8 put on the reserve list, of which 1 has been later on approved thanks to the possibility for the COM to top-up. Agreements will be signed by the end of next week, then the projects will be published on CHAFEA website.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Higher competition means that only top/excellent proposals can be accepted.
- There were less ineligible proposals this year but their share is still too high.
- Eligibility and representativeness are difficult to understand so COM/CHAFEA is trying to give additional attention to these issues and will provide more explanations at the Info Day.

Looking at the quality of proposals, cost-effectiveness is the most common difficulty (e.g. extremely high share of product samples and large budgets). CHAFEA has published a [list of the most common mistakes](#) on its website. Webinars are also available for free for registered individuals.

Other content useful for project submission:

- [Eligibility checker](#)
- [Campaign visual creator](#)

The Info Day will take place in Brussels on 31 January 2018. Registration is already open via CHAFEA website. It will have new formats: matchmaking and presentation of trade opportunities in Third Countries (TC).

An e-mail campaign will be launched to inform on funding opportunities within the 2018 Annual Work Programme (AWP). Target groups will be: potential applicants, media, stakeholders, etc. The campaign will take place in December and January.

Questions/comments raised:

Grateful for the efforts from CHAFEA to improve the process.

Interest for more detailed stats, e.g. ‘basket of products’, dairy and f&v are broad categories. What’s in them? One option would be to use the custom code. This would also help monitoring that CAP resources really go to agriculture.

What are the chances for projects in the reserve list to be chosen? If the list is “frozen” until January, we already have to start preparing a project for the 2018 call.

Big companies should not be eligible, priority should be given to rural, small businesses. Climate change should also be a criterion.

Eligibility and admissibility are indeed important issues but the high share of proposals below the threshold is surprising as well. What are the reasons? What actions does the COM intend to take?

AGRI/CHAFEA replied that the abstract of successful projects will be available next year on CHAFEA’s portal. Stats already show almost 20 categories. If COM had to provide a more detailed table, e.g. by product and not by category, it would be a long, unreadable list. Using the custom code would be very complicated. Applicants are free to share themselves the custom code, the score, the evaluation, etc.

MS have to inform COM 20 days after deadline (of 90 days) and COM will then in 10 days inform the MS concerned if there’s any project taken from the reserve list that can get the funding, hence the chances for the projects in the reserve list will be known in February.

The objectives of the regulation take into account the predominance of SMEs in agriculture and that’s why eligibility was enlarged to POs, which are encouraged to apply.

It’s true that there’s a high share of proposals below the quality threshold. The most difficult criterion to achieve is cost-effectiveness. A first lesson is: budget effectively. Also, it’s highly recommended to read the guide for applicants, especially the part related to drafting the technical proposal: it reminds which information one needs to present in the proposal.

There is no discrimination in terms of languages: CHAFEA portal is in English but several docs are available in all languages. CHAFEA will consider the possibility to translate crucial docs for the preparation of the proposals.

2. Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2018:

a) Presentation of the AWP for 2018 – Exchange of views on its implementation, by E. CLERC (AGRI B1)

AGRI reminded that the AWP is a key document setting the strategic priorities and the respective budget. The 2018 AWP was drafted taking into account the objective of the basic act; for TC, a macro-economic analysis; contributions from stakeholders and MS; the results of the 2017 calls and the High Level Missions.

The 2018 calls for proposals will be published in mid-January. All the criteria for financial contributions (eligibility/exclusion selection/award criteria) are already contained in the AWP, hence one does not need to wait for until the publication of the calls to start preparing a proposal.

New elements for 2018 are: increased budget; earmarked envelopes for sustainable sheep/goat meat and for f&v both in the IM; more flexibility in multi programmes.

Contrary to previous years, the sheep/goat and f&v sectors would be able to apply for both the earmarked topics and all the other topics, provided the messages are different from ‘sustainability’ and ‘healthy eating’ respectively. The focus on third countries is indicated by the basic act.

COM will soon call for inputs for the next exercise AWP 2019.

b) Trade and market prospects for 2019, by P. LONDERO (AGRI C2)

AGRI explained why the scheduled March meeting would be timelier for such an agenda item: AGRI short term report looks at the current and following year, hence the last issues from October looks at 2017 and 2018. It covers crops, meat, dairy, some f&v, wine and olive oil. Next issue will be released in March and it will cover 2019. This is one of the tools used for the AWP. AGRI medium term outlook report will be released on 18 December. It will cover until 2030. The focus will be on consumption. On the occasion of the launch of the medium-term outlook, AGRI will organise a 2 day-conference that will be web-streamed.

Questions/comments raised:

Currently there are projects run by the UK and programmes targeting the UK. What will be the impact of the UK leaving the EU on these projects?

The “hard Brexit” scenario would mean double of exports to third countries. Has the COM taken this scenario into consideration?

It will be very difficult for the flowers and ornamental plants sectors to present projects in 2018 because quality schemes and specific features of EU agriculture are not relevant for these sectors. How can they be given equal opportunities?

There’s an issue of fairness for sectors that have a dedicated envelope (e.g. goat/sheep meat) and that can apply under any other envelope as well.

The experience with the 2 previous years shows that the AWP shouldn’t contain too many sections or it would be too complex. Criteria such as nutrition and sustainability are important but it’s advisable not to break it too much.

The EU market is still key for some sectors and consumption is going down. A more balanced distribution between IM and TC is desired. It’s important to let EU consumers know that EU standards are higher than TCs’.

AGRI replied that there will be a disclaimer on Brexit in all calls. If the UK withdraws from the EU without an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, the UK will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project. At this stage, it’s not possible to know the details.

Flowers and ornamental plants are eligible under many topics. Last year and previous year they were successful with their applications. As the budget for multi-programmes will increase in 2018, there will be opportunities in IM and TC.

The crisis call is governed by strict criteria: in case of unexpected market disturbance/loss of market confidence, promotion would be an adequate response and complementary to CMO measures; unexpected serious market disturbances should have EU dimension. If there is no crisis, the reallocation criteria are indicated in the AWP and the calls.

The basic act specifically refers to encouraging promotion measures in TC. The IM is still well represented and there are opportunities, in particular for quality schemes. Also,

for multi-programmes, there are 42 Mio EUR for IM and 32 Mio EUR for TC so quite a big share for IM.

3. High Level Missions (HLM), by P. LIBERT (AGRI B1):

a) Debriefing on the HLM to Iran and South Arabia

b) Information and discussion on the preparation of the next HLM

AGRI recalled that a HLM to Saudi Arabia and Iran took place on 7-13 November 2017. It underlined the political (bilateral meetings of the Commissioner with local authorities) and the business (Business delegation activities) aspects of the HLM. CHAFEA has prepared 2 market entry handbooks.

In Saudi Arabia, Commissioner Hogan underlined the need for regulatory predictability, transparency and information-sharing regarding the legislative measures which may have an impact on trade and investments; raised the importance of international standards with regards to import rules; discussed strengthening agricultural cooperation both with Saudi Arabia and the GCC; raised the EU concern with the Saudi-imposed import ban on bone-in meat (beef) and Saudi authorities was reassuring indicating that importing requirements would be changed and the ban lifted; insisted on ensuring that pending applications from EU MS to authorise market access for meat (beef, sheep & goat, poultry) are processed swiftly and exports are resumed.

In Iran, Commissioner Hogan had a number of high-level political meetings which led to significant progress in a number of areas, including the very welcome decision by Iranian authorities to make it easier to export EU beef and sheep meat, by adopting a single health certification system for exports from all EU MS. Relevant regulatory arrangements are expected to be in place during the first half of 2018, reducing red tape and costs for European exporters.

Next year HLM would take place in May in China at SIAL. Other possible missions will be discussed early next year and they will depend on the agenda of the Commissioner (demanding due to the future CAP) and on the FTAs.

Questions/comments raised:

The HLM are an extremely useful opportunity for the industry, we're very thankful for them. COM negotiates the FTAs, MS export, so the economic operators have no bargaining power, instead HLM let us in the countries and tackle trade barriers.

HLM is a remarkable work, especially in Iran. Commissioner Hogan and COM really opened up the other part for tariffs but also for raising standards and norms, e.g. if Iran raises its standards for beef, Mongolia will have to raise its standards while EU is ready to export.

What are criteria to select the companies taking part in the HLM?

AGRI replied that the criteria are: geographical balance; sectorial balance and sectors with more opportunities in the country; balance of big and small companies (e.g. taking 2 big genetic companies from AT was not possible).

4. Interim report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the application of the Regulation (due by 31 December 2018) and future evolution of the policy, by E. CLERC (AGRI B1)

AGRI explained that COM is expected to prepare 2 reports: an intermediate one by end-2018 and a full one by end-2020. The intermediate one is just an analysis of the implementation. COM will start working on this doc early next year, on the basis of stats but also what works and what doesn't. It is too early today to talk about it but it will be possible at the next meeting in March.

Questions/comments raised:

Some possible improvements of the legislation are: enlarging the list of eligible products; increasing the pre-financing; the possibility to show all the products of a company; the rules regarding brands. Will this report allow to also improve the legislation and not just the working of the programmes?

It was agreed that this point will be taken up again at the next meeting, when timing is more appropriate and the discussion is open on it.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

Guidance

This part of the minutes should include comprehensive information on possible general conclusions reached or recommendations/opinions delivered by the group, including the outcome of a vote.

5. Next steps

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

Tentative dates for 2018: 7 March, 29 June, 10 December, promotion and quality at each meeting

7. List of participants - Annex

List of participants– Minutes

Civil Dialogue Group Quality and Promotion

Date: 15/12/2017

	MEMBER ORGANISATION	NAME OF REPRESENTATIVES
1	Arepo	Laurent GOMEZ
2	Arepo	Alberto VENTURA
3	CEJA	Jose Maria CASTILLA BARO
4	CEJA	Ferdinand COOKSON ZUECO
5	CEJA	Stefan KRAJEWSKI
6	CEJA	Rudy MARRANCHELLI
7	CELCAA	Mathilde CHAREYRON
8	CELCAA	Declan COPPINGER
9	CELCAA	Carmen GARROTE
10	CELCAA	Carlo GOMEZ DE TERRAN
11	COGECA	Eric KAM
12	COGECA	Claire MARTIN
13	COGECA	Javier VALLE
14	COGECA	Jerzy WIERZBICKI
15	COPA	Ermanno COPPOLA
16	COPA	Gonzalo GORRALES CIGANDA
17	COPA	Solvita GULPE
18	COPA	Christian JOCHUM
19	ECVC	Jean-Jacques MATHIEU
20	EFFAT	Anna GENNARI
21	EFOW	Daniela Ida ZANDONA
22	ELO	Ana ROCHA
23	EMB	Erwin SCHOEPGES
24	ERPA	Agnes LASZCZYK LEGENDRE
25	EuroCommerce	Corina Stefania MOISE

26	EUROCOOP	Silvia SCHMIDT
27	EUROMONTANA	Elena DI BELLA
28	FACE Network	Mirosław Mirek SIENKIEWICZ
29	FoodDrinkEurope	Francesca BIGNAMI
30	FoodDrinkEurope	Jiri KOPACEK
31	FoodDrinkEurope	Laura MARLEY
32	FoodDrinkEurope	Paolo PATRUNO
33	FoodDrinkEurope	François TOMEI
34	IFOAM EU GROUP	Francesca ROMERO
35	IFOAM EU GROUP	Martin STADLBAUER
36	IFOAM EU GROUP	Johanna STUMPNER
37	oriGin	Sébastien BRETON
38	oriGin	Simone CALZI
39	SACAR	Romain COOLS
40	SACAR	Sylvie MAMIAS
41	SACAR	Simona RUBBI
42	Slow Food	Dessislava PETKOVA-VARADINOVA