



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate D. Sustainability and income support
D.4. Environment, climate change, forestry and bio-economy

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MINUTES

Meeting of the

CDG ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Meeting via videoconference

03 December 2021

Chair: Mauro POINELLI (9:30 – 10:30), Andreas PILZECKER (10:30- 15:00)

Delegations present: All organizations were present, except BeeLife, Can Europe, EuropaBio, EBB, EuroCommerce, EuroCoop, ECPA, EFFAT, EOCC.

1. Approval of the agenda

Agenda was approved. Minutes of the previous meeting had been agreed to prior to that meeting.

2. Nature of the meeting

Non-public

3. List of points discussed

Agreement on new Rules of Procedure

Draft new RoP were shared with the group prior to the meeting. Chair explains that the mandate for CDGs expired in July 2021, a COM decision provides for extension up to the end of 2022. Main change is that COM now chairs the meetings. Participants still to suggest the topics to be discussed. Next year a horizontal revision of the whole CDG system will take place.

The group approved the new Rules of Procedures.

COP 26 - Commission perspective on EU commitments, role for the EU Institutions and role and expectations from the EU agri-food chain. (AGRI D4)

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting. Focus on agricultural negotiations (Koronivia), reporting back to COP on agricultural actions identified to be worth to be carried forward at international scale. Good progress, work ongoing.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

Role of carbon credits (Art 6 Paris Agreement), with the need to avoid double-counting through compulsory corresponding adjustment and need for capacity-building to help countries to set up their monitoring and reporting. No carry-over of credits from CDM/Kyoto only beyond 2030, limited carry-over from-pre 2020.

Removals/sinks (Art 5) – role of forestry: There was not targeted discussions on forests.

Agriculture was maybe not in the overall focus at COP, but the side events on agriculture were very important to spread good messages. Agriculture plays an important role in the fight against climate change, role of financing, technology, knowhow and divulgation. Role of data at farm level.

Agro-ecology was discussed in a workshop just before the COP. Main conclusions were drawn from there, trying to acknowledge the role of agro-ecology in some countries. But this was pushed back by some parties. But EU and others will try to keep it when reporting back to COP.

State of discussion of measures which deliver co-benefits/biodiversity: Compromise wording on importance is mentioned in cover decision, will feed into land dialogue. Link to CBD, role of nature-based solutions.

Finance from Green Climate Fund, but much more important to find funds outside the UNFCCC system.

Global Methane Pledge (global, non-binding commitment) is not specifically addressing livestock.

Update on the evaluation of Directive 2009/128/EC on the 'Sustainable Use of Pesticides' and impact assessment of its possible revision. (SANTE F3)

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

Risk Indicators: The need for more than just the harmonized risk indicators. The challenge is the lack of data, which the Commission is working to address.

Measuring progress on Farm to Fork targets: The different situation and characteristics of Member States should be taken into account. Keep baseline start at 2012? Some Member

States have already done a lot, it is important that is taken fully into account. Farm to Fork Strategy makes it clear that different Member State positions can be taken into account. Farm to Fork also sets ambitious goals – so everyone will have to make progress

Role of technology, digital farming: Will not help to reach the current reduction target Higher reduction/total phase-out needed. Invest into agro-ecological practices. Commission is open to looking at new technologies, as long as they contribute to the goal of the sustainable use of pesticides – not technology for the sake of technology. It must help achieve the aims of the Directive.

Need to improve the statistics on pesticides. Fully agree, this is a priority for the Commission.

Farmers need enough in their toolbox to protect against pests. Two priorities highlighted by stakeholders in this regard include the need for increased research and that the rules must be the same for other countries.

Organic farmers underline that the contribution of organic farming needs to be fully recognised in the SUD (not just IPM).

New Genomic Techniques (NGTs): update from the EC on the next steps. (SANTE E3)

The Commission presented the background and progress on the Commission's policy action concerning the legislation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques.

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting.

In the Q&A, the following issues and views were raised by stakeholders.

Copa-Cogeca stressed that NGTs are a very important tool to increase yields and reduce use of pesticides and urged the Commission to table a proposal swiftly, ideally next year.

IFOAM underlined that there is a need for sound basis for any action and a thorough impact assessment is needed. Current legislations is fit for purpose, for example as regards the role of EFSA in risk assessments. The overall farming system is more relevant than single traits/variant. Example of BT cotton, creating sustainability issues in the long run (resistance).

IFOAM also referred to the importance of detection strategies and the Commission's role as a coordinator in this respect.

The Commission noted that the European Reference Laboratory on GM food/feed (EURL) has already worked on the detection of gene-edited plants and had highlighted the difficulties to differentiate the source of mutation.

CEEV enquired about the recent high-level event on NGTs and noted that research and innovation are key in order to advance in this topic.

The Commission informed that the high-level event overall confirmed the views that NGTs can contribute to sustainability as well as the need for a case-by-case risk

assessments. Discussion also included the need for transparency and consumer information, and how to best achieve this.

The Commission confirmed that all plants, including for forestry are within the scope of the policy action.

Finally, Slowfood noted that labelling needs to be clear and transparent and that sustainability labelling might not enable consumers to identify NGTs.

Update on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (PPWD) review: update on next key milestones and steps. (ENV B3)

Given the role of packaging in total waste, we need action on packaging, improving its circularity to decouple consumption from production, not only through recycling, but also prevention and reuse.

Ecodesign covers the whole value chain, considers end of life. Waste management: Less waste for more value. As mandated by the Green deal, we also have to address unnecessary packaging. Recycling is not sufficient because we have to consider the issue more upstream at design phase to make packaging reusable or recyclable so that it keeps its value longer, not only after the first use.

Legislation (Packaging Directive 94/62/EC) to be revised to stimulate reuse and waste prevention. 4 sets of measures considered: a definition of recyclable packaging that is currently lacking; reinforcement of the Essential Requirements for packaging to be placed on the market; new targets on recycled content and on reuse; Measures for harmonized labelling and separate collection.

Public consultation is closed, impact assessment with options is being drafted, proposal for a directive probably around mid-2022.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

Paper and wood-product use might increase for packaging. But forests have other important roles, do we have enough raw material? A balanced approach is needed, there is a role for glass/aluminum also.

How will costs be impacted, not only for farmers? The circular action plan acknowledges the need to mobilise funds to support innovation.

EU harmonized standards are important for the functioning of the common market, national regulation does the contrary. This is also important that recycling actually works across EU.

Presentation of the FIT55 with a focus on LULUCF. (CLIMA C3)

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting.

Need for good metrics for agriculture, MS still do not report trees outside forests in grassland and croplands. Role of Annex III of the proposal is enhancing monitoring. By 2026 all carbon pool should be tier 2 reporting, for particular areas that should be tier 3, but MS have some flexibility there. Reporting need to be underpinned by the Geographical information System. Funding under the eco-schemes and pillar II can feed into the improved monitoring. Reference to carbon farming schemes coming up and the need to what is done stays. MS should develop their systems as appropriate, CAP systems are well audited, so not the biggest concern there.

Are carbon markets the right tool to devise carbon sequestration? Would the proposal - merging agriculture with forest sink - lead to increased sequestration?

Agriculture will be the only sector left in effort sharing with the COM proposals if one takes into account the proposal for transport/heating fuels. Agriculture is left out and there is a need for specific action.

Cost-effective reduction should reflect MS potential, but for the moment there is just this proposed objective at EU level which is achievable. Land sector creation is ok. Climate-neutrality there in 2035 is a concern. Clarify agricultural contribution. At this stage it is a target at EU level in the LULUCF proposal. MS contribution will be figured out. Details take another legislative cycle. Climate-neutrality is feasible at EU-level.

Soils strategy points at some possible actions. Technical potential versus what is really feasible by 2030, mainly reduction of emissions from organic soils plus modest contribution from improvement in mineral soils. Market-based approaches are emerging.

Good to renew LULUCF calculation methodology. The new AFOLU sector needs to be formed at national level. More science needed, specifically for soil type and soil management specific emission factors. GDP/capita may not be the appropriate allocation key in view of the cost-efficiency principle, may create pressure for some MS agricultural sectors.

Legal requirements play a strong role in advancing methodologies, funding (such as through LIFE) can assist MS in improving. The other sectors within ESR have - or will soon have - strong policies in place (cap and trade), but not agriculture.

Commission impact assessment on Sustainability of Food System and sustainable food labelling framework (Farm to Fork strategy): update on next steps and way forward (AGRI C1)

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

Good to look into the definition of sustainability. But sustainability has many pillars, including social and economic. Take into account the efforts of the CAP reform, preserve global competitiveness of the EU agro-food sector, consumer need to be transparently informed, new initiatives need to create value added/no more red tape.

Discussions on really improving sustainability are welcome, avoid green washing. Articulation with green claims initiative. Labelling needs to be comprehensive, not only focused on carbon footprint, but also biodiversity.

The framework will indeed be comprehensive in terms of sustainability concept applied. Building on existing is the starting point. New CAP is expected to improve overall sustainability of agriculture. The new framework will be complementary, closing identified gaps, and sector-specific to food system, taking into account better regulation principles. Biodiversity will be integral part of this initiative.

The process for the framework has just started and further input and discussions are important.

State of play on the situation on the large carnivores – presentation from members of the CDG (presentation by Copa-Cogeca)

‘Large carnivores’ is taking its toll across Europe. Populations are increasing. Damages, numbers of attacks, kills of animals increase. Compensation payments increase. Some losses are not compensated, burden of proof sometimes on farmers. Protection is not working. Guarding dogs are getting stressed and violent, and being killed themselves. Fences normally do not provide an effective barrier.

Green Deal is for more biodiversity, but the result is that domestic animals are increasingly locked into stables. Expensive (time, labour, money) mitigation measures. Lack of protection of farmers leads to land abandonment. Impacts on human life.

Better management of population is needed, effective use of derogations. Revise annexes of habitat directive to enable farmers to protect themselves and their animals.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

One solution is to install ‘zones of herd protection/pasture protection areas’, this allows removal of carnivores in that zones. But this is not possible everywhere. We need a unified view on a favorable conservation status.

Abandonment of land leads to loss in biodiversity. Carnivores increase abandonment. Situation is unbalanced.

Fencing does also impact on movements of other large mammals. Limited legal hunting is effective.

Copa-Cogeca might share their findings with DG ENV, DG AGRI for potential follow-up.

Presentation on the EU soil strategy. (ENV D1)

Presentation (slides) shown were shared with participants after the meeting.

In the Q&A, the following issues were discussed.

Copa Cogeca: There is no need for European legislation. See fate of the draft soil framework directive in 2014 which had to be withdrawn due to resistance by MS. Soil is largely privately owned. Ownership rights may be affected. Avoid duplication and bureaucracy.

EC: This time is different. ‘Obligation of efforts’ is being replaced by ‘obligation for results’, so leaving more flexibility to MS to define their actions; those MS having already soil legislation would then already comply while the others would be called to fill the gap. The Commission will listen again to concerns in detail during the upcoming consultation.

Copa Cogeca: Protection of soil health is a necessity. Cost of inaction – is there any idea of the cost of action?

EC: There was an important study, referenced in the soils strategy. Impact Assessment will look at costs and benefits.

Copa Cogeca: Soil functions are being influenced by the changing climate. This beyond farmers’ influence. Legislation should take into account what is actually within the remit of farmers.

EC: There is an ongoing review of a technical report European Environmental Agency on indicators and threshold for monitoring soil quality.

IFOAM: EU legal framework is very much welcome. Soil is a common good. Soil protection should also be in carbon farming. EU nature restoration law – what actions on soil protection?

EC: Soil strategy contains a set of actions: role of the CAP to address soil health. Need to define set of sustainable soil practices.

AOB

n. a.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

n. a.

5. Next steps

n. a.

6. Next meeting

16 March 2022

7. List of participants

See below

(e-signed)

Mauro POINELLI

List of participants– Minutes
Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group “Environment and Climate Change”
03/12/2021

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
AnimalhealthEurope	1
Bee Life-Europena Coordination (Bee Life)	----
CEMA - European Agricultural Machinery (CEMA)	1
Climate Action Network Europa (CAN Europe)	----
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	1
EU Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures (FEFANA)	1
Eurogroup for Animals	1
EuropaBio	----
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	3
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	2
European Biodiesel Board (EBB)	----
EuroCommerce	----
European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (EUROCOOP)	----
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	1
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	2
European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)	----
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	4
European farmers (COPA)	4
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	----
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	1
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	3
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	2
European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC)	----
Fertilizers Europe	1
FoodDrinkEurope	2
IFOAM Organics Europe	2
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	2
Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunion (SACAR)	1
Slow Food	1
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	2
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	2
Invited speaker	1
Total	41