



Brussels
AGRI.DDG1.B/NSV(2021)

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE «CDG QUALITY AND PROMOTION»

30/11/2021

Chair: morning session – Head of Unit DG AGRI B3, afternoon session – Head of Unit DG AGRI B1

Delegations present: All Member organisations were present, except EFFAT, EuroCommerce, EUROCOOP and WWF EPO.

Approval of the agenda: Agenda of the meeting was approved.

Nature of the meeting: The meeting was non-public. Meeting was organised for the appointed CDG organisations and was not web streamed.

Policy points discussed during the CDG Quality Policy and Promotion

Morning session on Quality

1. Adoption of the rules of procedure

The Commission representative informed about the changes in the rules of procedure. This is a result of the study and analysis that confirmed that the Commission should take the chair of the Committee. The main purpose of the Committee will be preserved – it will continue to serve as the forum for exchange of views with stakeholders in the food chain.

SACAR and COGECA thanked for organising the meeting and expressed the need to continue with the maximum involvement of stakeholders, including for preparing the agendas for the meetings.

The consensus was observed and the rules of procedure were adopted.

2. Revision of geographical indications (including sustainability aspects) – state of play - Presentation by the Commission

The Commission representative presented the current state of play of the revision of GIs. It is based on the mandate of the Commissioner Wojciechowski from President Von der Leyen. Strengthening the framework of GIs is also mentioned in the Farm to

Fork Strategy and in the IP Action Plan. The Commission representative provided the overview of the Impact assessment (IA) process. Positive opinion on the draft Impact Assessment Report was received from the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) in October 2021. The drafting of legislative proposal is currently ongoing and the adoption is foreseen for Q1 2022. The IA identified several challenges based on which two general objectives of the revision will be to ensure effective protection of IP rights in the EU and to increase take up of GIs. General objectives were further translated into 6 specific objectives and 3 options for GI revision:

- Option 1: Improve and support,
- Option 2: Better define and reinforce,
- Option 3: Harmonise and upgrade.

The analysis showed that Option 2 would be the best. It will address the management of GIs, sustainability, empowering of GI producer groups, enforcement and protection on internet and protection of traditional product names. Regarding the sustainability, there is a clear demand from the stakeholders. However, it is important to note that the Commission is planning sustainability labelling across the board, covering also GIs. Therefore, the current revision of GIs cannot prejudice these outcomes and thus the Commission will not propose the mandatory use of sustainability criteria for GIs but only voluntary. Regarding protection on internet, the action will be focused on parts of the internet under EU or Member State law (.eu and .MS domains).

The Commission representative informed about the availability of all related documents on the Commission website. In the coming weeks, there will be also a Staff Working Document on the policy evaluation published; IA report will be published in Q1 2022 as an annex to the legal proposal.

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- EFOW: How does the Commission plan to integrate the health and nutrition aspects of sustainability in GIs product specification, specifically in the wine sector? The wine sector has always supported the concept of moderation.
- COGECA: GIs represent the cultural heritage. The specificities of the GI system cannot be watered down and the direction of the policy cannot be changed every three years. GIs often have high levels of fat or salt, but these are often the reason of their taste. Also, it is important to emphasise that it is all about enjoying GI products with moderation. It is important to look at how the sustainability can be reconciled with the GI system without the basic characteristics of GIs being lost. With a nutriscore there is a risk that GI products will be put in a bad light.
- ECVC: It is important to pay attention to the impact of pesticides and fertilisers on the wine sector and to look at the quality of products and what they bring to consumers.
- FACE network: What are the details of the type of tools and assistance foreseen for empowering producer groups? Will these tools also concern TSG products?
- COGECA: COGECA welcomed the fact that producer groups will be empowered and stressed that when it comes to harmonisation, it is quite clear that Member States have competences. But in the course of the current revision, it would be good to increase efficiency and inform national authorities about deadlines.

- SACAR: Agreed with COGECA on the importance of administrative improvements. It would be good to avoid procedures running for more than 3 years.

Commission responses:

- On health concerns in GIs – with regard to wine, there are changes in the CMO Regulation, namely the possibility to de-alcoholise wines. It is going to be up to producers to decide how their products should be healthier with regard to lower level of some ingredients. This is going to be voluntary. The Commission is aware that it is not possible for all products. However, on one side there is a demand for the sustainability inclusion and on the other hand there are already some producers introducing sustainability criteria. Therefore, the Commission supports producers to reflect on this. The Commission has already received some applications, e.g. in case of hams – with decreasing the amount of salt.
- On sustainability in general – the Commission does not intend to change definitions of GIs. The producers will need to reflect whether there is a scope for improvement of their products in terms of the sustainability criteria (economic, social and environmental). The aim is not to put GIs in danger. Therefore, the commitments to sustainability will be voluntary.
- On quality – the aim is to preserve the quality of GIs, the objective is to encourage producers in the areas of low-take up of GIs to better organise themselves and to submit applications for GIs.
- On producer groups' empowerment – the aim is that producer groups will become entities that will be recognised by the Member State authorities and thus will be able to better organise themselves and submit applications. The objective is to increase the activity of producer groups also in further steps beyond the application (e.g. training of producers, surveillance of the market, amendments to product specifications, etc.). The Commission will provide the list of roles that producer groups can play.
- On administration at Member States' level – Member States are first to assess the applications and the Commission relies on a thorough assessment by the Member States' authorities. At the Commission level, we decreased the time for approval, notably of minor amendments, and in near future, Member States will approve the smaller amendments also in the food sector. The Commission will also continue with training of Member States' authorities and interested producers in order to equip them with good practices and as regards Member States, with the guidance on how to process applications. The Commission plans to provide more guidance materials.

The Commission representative stressed that nothing is yet approved by the College. Definitions of GIs will not be changed.

3. Delegated and implementing acts for the amended Regulation on the common organisation of the agricultural markets - state of play

The Commission representative presented the state of play on delegated and implementing acts in food GI sector for the EP and Council Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 (CMO Regulation, including wine FI), (EU) No

1151/2012 (GI Food) and (EU) No 251/2014 (aromatised wines, including aromatised wines GI).

That Regulation will be possibly adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council at the end of this year and enter into force on 01/01/2022. It contains new rules on geographical indications (GI) in wine, food, and aromatised wines sectors. The new rules on GI are likely to enter into force from 1/1/2022. However, rules for the Union and standard amendments for food will enter into force on 1/7/2022. The Commission asked the co-legislators for a transitional period to have enough time to adopt the Delegated and Implementing Acts (DA and IA) on practical procedures for the Union and Standard amendments in food. After 1/1/2022 the old rules on amendments will no longer be in force while the new rules cannot be practically applied because of the absence of the procedural rules. These procedural rules (DA and IA for food GIs) need to be adopted as soon as possible to have the system functioning properly.

The Commission has started discussing a text of DA and IA (in the Expert Group and in the Committee). A meeting was held in late October 2021. Another one will follow before the end of the year.

After the adoption of IA and DA, the objection procedure with the EP and the Council must be launched for the DA (2 months, can be extended to 4 months). DA and IA could be adopted in March 2022 and enter into force on 1/7/2022.

DA and IA (food) will therefore be focussed on the application of the amendment procedures following the new classification in Union and standard amendments.

Union amendments are those that include a change in the name, or that risk voiding the link, or that entail further restrictions on the marketing of the product. Amendments that are not Union are standard amendments. Union amendments are adopted by the Commission, following an opposition procedure at the EU level. Standard amendments are adopted at Member State level. From the general point of view, the inclusion of the Union and Standard amendments is a crucial step in the evolution of the food GI legislation. It is a real simplification.

The Commission also intends to include in the IA for food GIs a mandatory use of e-Ambrosia. Under the new rules on the compulsory use of e-Ambrosia for submitting GI applications, only Member States may be accredited in the e-Ambrosia system, and only for applications for registration and amendment, and communication of standard and temporary amendment. Oppositions and cancellations are excluded (still need to be communicated by electronic mail). Third countries are not allowed to be accredited in the system. The requirement for the mandatory use of e-Ambrosia will enter into force 6 months after the entry into force of DA and IA (so the use of e-Ambrosia will become compulsory for Member States on 1/1/2023).

4. Food fraud – information based on the monthly reporting by the Joint Research Centre

The Commission representative presented the general context of the food fraud, examples and consequences as well as the methodology of Food fraud monthly report prepared by JRC – it is a collection of online news regarding the food fraud cases. This was followed by the presentation of the results of a 4-year analysis of food fraud in different food categories. The Commission informed about the platform where all food fraud reports are published.

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- SACAR: There are some cases of food fraud that are raised at the political level but they are not verified. It is dangerous to refer to such cases without the evidence. Such cases are sometimes used for destabilization of reputation of products. Therefore, it is important to be careful what to include in the report.
- COGECA: How does JRC deal with food fraud that is related to origin? As this is something that cannot be confirmed in the lab, but we see the increasing number of cases in this category in recent years. Is there something that the Commission can do about it – is there a methodology? Is there a way to integrate into this system national authorities and producers?
- ECVC: The food fraud often occurs in industrial products. When the production is diversified, people know where it comes from.
- COGECA: The EU does not have tools to detect some food frauds – e.g. in honey. Therefore, there is a real problem in terms of traceability. Has the Commission seen any trends in the monitored 4-year period and has the EU thought about setting up the framework that could take into account the trend of development (policy response)?
- COPA: The dual quality of food meets all the criteria to be classified as a food fraud. These products were not considered in this presentation.
- SACAR: Disclaimer of JRC in the report is not a solution. Reference should only be made to media articles referring to verified or confirmed cases occurring nationally or internationally or to other European sources OLAF, RASFF, etc.

Commission responses:

- On verification of food fraud: Regarding the news as a source, JRC is aware of the fact that the report does not refer to sources validated officially. That is also the reason for inserting a dedicated disclaimer at the beginning of each Food Fraud Monthly Report. There is no obligation for Member States to report food fraud cases taking place only within their national borders (differently from iRASFF, covering cross-country food fraud cases), therefore the Food Fraud Monthly Report constitutes a valid source of information highlighting national food fraud cases (all over the world) otherwise unreported in the EU systems..
- On methodology of frauds related to origin: It is indeed difficult to catch the origin of products. There are some techniques – catching molecules coming from some areas, but it is not possible to do it in case of all products.
- On methodology of food fraud: Detection of food fraud depends on the nature of fraud and on the type of product. There are also different methodologies for different products. Regarding the trends, it is not possible to analyse the development of cases captured by the Food Fraud Monthly Report in 4 years, because the methodology, the sources and the keyword list have been changing over time. We are currently reflecting on how to strengthen the traceability and the predictive analytics capacity covering the European food systems.

- There is quite a consensus that longer supply chains are more vulnerable to food fraud than the shorter supply chains, given the higher number of actors and transactions.
- On dual quality food: There were two reports published so far, in 2019 and 2021. In the majority of cases, the composition matched the way products were presented. Differences in food products do not follow a geographical pattern, and sensory differences are clearly noticeable, where there are large differences in product composition. Moreover, the differences in the composition found in the products tested do not necessarily constitute a difference in product quality.

5. Any Other Business

Labelling: Roadmap nutritional labelling (nutrient profile) – nutriscore, and EU sustainable food system initiative and sustainability labelling – ecoscore

The Commission representative informed that the lead service is DG SANTE, which is not present in the meeting but the written information from DG SANTE is posted on CIRCABC. Once the open public consultation is published, stakeholders in the CDG are welcome to contribute.

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- COGECA: Civil dialogue is a very useful tool that has been used in AGRI for decades as it enables to exchange the views of the Commission and stakeholders and industry. However, in recent years, the exchange with other services is quite limited. It would be useful if AGRI could encourage other DGs to be more active in exchanging the views with the civil dialogue group.

Commission response:

- Other services are invited but due to other meetings and engagements, they are not always able to participate. Other DGs have also other mechanisms of consulting stakeholders. Also, AGRI reports the relevant comments back to other services.

Afternoon session on Promotion

1. Annual work programme for 2022 – Presentation by DG AGRI B1

The Commission presented the draft annual work programme for 2022 that will be adopted in the coming days, highlighting the differences in relation to the previous annual work programme (2021).

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- Some delegates asked if there was any topic in the annual work programme that was dedicated to promoting a reduction in the consumption of highly processed foods. The Commission confirmed that the promotion policy was not aimed at funding public health messages such as messages to reduce consumption of particular products.
- The change in the name of the topic to promote consumption of fruits and vegetables in the context of healthy diets (not referring to “proper diets”) was

welcomed by some delegates. The Commission clarified that this topic continues to be defined as promotion programmes aiming at increasing the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in the internal market in the context of balanced and proper dietary practices.

- Delegates expressed disappointment that the budget allocated to the promotion of geographical indications was so low. The Commission clarified that the topic and budget allocated to promotion of EU quality schemes was unchanged from the 2021 annual work programme. The topic on sustainability is also accessible to GIs. A significant allocation was made to the promotion of the EU organic label as required by the ambitious objectives of the Farm to fork strategy and the organic action plan.
- Questions were raised about the practical implementation of the new requirement for visual materials developed for campaigns targeting the internal market to refer to the food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) of the country(ies) targeted. The Commission clarified that the reference requested was to the site where the relevant FBDG is presented. This requirement was already included as a “recommendation” in the 2021 annual work programme. More information with examples will be presented and discussed at the EU promotion policy info-days that are being organised for 1-2 February.
- Delegates expressed disappointment that the budget allocated to co-fund promotion campaigns in third-countries represented a lower share of the budget, even though these promotion actions were found in the evaluation of the policy to be highly effective. The Commission responded that the need to support the Farm to fork strategy, Europe’s Beating cancer plan and the organic action plan required a higher focus on the internal market.
- Delegates expressed concerns that with the annual work programme 2022 text, the Commission was stigmatising meat products, without a sound legal basis as a reference, and seemingly based on a Lancet study, the findings of which have since been challenged by multiple scholars and reputable academic institutions. Moreover, delegates expressed confusion as the Farm to fork strategy talks about promoting the most sustainable, carbon efficient livestock management and in response to the End the Cage age citizens’ initiative the Commission committed to using the promotion policy to incentivise higher animal welfare standards. The Commission responded that the current policy does not discriminate against specific products and that all products with the exception of tobacco are eligible for co-funding.
- Finally, delegates asked the Commission to recognise the importance of the EU agri-food promotion policy in trying to cover a larger (extending) set of policy priorities and asked for an allocation of budget to this policy that is adequate. These delegates considered the budget of the annual work programme 2022 inadequate.

2. Update on the review of the EU agri-food promotion policy - Presentation DG AGRI B1

The Commission presents an update on the review of the promotion policy focusing on the developments since the last meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group on promotion (1 July 2021); notably the outcome of the online public consultation and the conference on the future of the promotion policy. The preparation of the impact

assessment is currently ongoing and any legislative proposals will be presented in the first half of 2022 (depending on the positive opinion of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board).

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- Delegates asked if the intention of the Commission was to recast a new legislative act or review the existing act. The Commission clarified that it was the latter.
- Delegates suggested that the definition of what are sustainable food systems should precede the integration of these concepts in annual work programmes. The Commission clarified that at this stage all references in annual work programmes are based on existing international definitions (FAO).
- Delegates asked if the data on impact indicators submitted by completed programmes and that was not yet available at the time of the evaluation was being taken into account in this impact assessment . Delegates considered that data would confirm the important contribution that the promotion policy has made to the competitiveness of EU farmers and agri-food industry. The Commission confirmed that this data was being analysed as part of the impact assessment report.

3. Update on the selection of simple and multi programmes from the 2021 Call - Research Executive Agency – REA.B.4

The Research Executive Agency presented the statistical analysis of the 2021 Call evaluation and selection for both simple and multi programmes.

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- Delegates suggested that the scores of the accepted proposals per topic should also be taken into account in the definition of the annual work programmes and in particular for deciding on the amounts allocated to each topic. They considered that for some topics, the lower level of competition seems to lead to selection of proposals that score lower. By contrast, proposals submitted in topics with more competition might end up not being funded despite receiving a higher score. The REA confirmed that was indeed one of the consequences of having multiple topics some of which are narrow and attract a limited number of applications. However, it should be pointed out that even for the topics with lowest minimum scores, the scores were still around 80 pts (which can be considered a good quality of proposals).
- Delegates asked for clarification concerning the application of the minimum thresholds and how the funds not used (left-overs) are reallocated. The REA clarified that there is a minimum threshold overall and per criteria that apply to all topics. Concerning the left-overs, REA explained that the terms for reallocation between topics are established in the annual work programme annex, and that final left overs for multi programmes is gathered at the end of the evaluation and selection process and is then deployed to fund the highest scoring proposals in the reserve list for multi programmes. The same exercise is applied also to simple programmes. The amount earmarked for crisis calls (5 M EUR per call) was added to the budget earmarked for third country topics in each call.

4. Commission own initiatives - Presentation by DG AGRI B1

The Commission presented the results of some of the events and campaigns executed under the own initiatives of the Commission, the update of the Market Handbook on China (with details about the NGO law) and the schedule for future campaigns and events. The Commission also informed the delegates that the High Level Mission planned for 2022 would have to be postponed given the current situation with travel restrictions.

Comments from the CDG delegates:

- Delegates suggested that the Commission takes into account major industry fairs organised in the EU when scheduling the High Level Missions.

5. Any Other Business

Situation in China: The Commission explained that the Market Entry Handbook for China has been updated. It now also addresss the NGO law in China. The Commission also reminded that it remains the responsibility of the beneficiaries to ensure compliance with local rules and regulations in target markets.

Statistical information about implementing bodies: The Commission explained that since the reform of the policy in 2014 it does not collect or store data on implementing bodies selected by the beneficiaries of the promotion programmes. The mandate of the Commission to seek this information from beneficiaries is also limited since these pertain to contractual business relations between each beneficiary and the implementing agency.

Agenda of future CDG meetings: The Commission is open to suggestions of future agenda items and will try to accommodate these suggestions with the limits of the time available for the meeting.

Nathalie SAUZE-VANDEVYVER

Annex: List of participants

List of participants– Minutes
MEETING OF THE «CDG QUALITY AND PROMOTION»
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MINISTRY OR ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
AREPO - Association des régions européennes des produits d'origine	2
BEUC - Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs	1
CEJA European Council of Young farmers	2
CELCAA European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade	4
COGECA European agri-cooperatives	4
COPA European farmers	4
ECVC European Coordination Via Campesina	1
EEB European Environmental Bureau	1
EFFAT European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions	---
EFNCP European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism	1
EFOW European Federation of Origin Wines	1
ELO European Landowners' Organization asbl	2
EMB European Milk Board	1
EPHA - European Public Health Alliance	1
ERPA - European Rural Poultry Association	1
EuroCommerce	---
EUROCOOP - Euro Coop - European Community of Consumer Co-operatives	---
EUROMONTANA	1
FACEnetwork - Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese and dairy producers' European network	1
FoEE - Friends of the Earth Europe	1
FoodDrinkEurope	5

IFOAM Organics Europe	2
oriGIn - Organisation pour un réseau international d'indications géographiques	1
SACAR - Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunion / Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations	3
Slow Food	1
WWF EPO European Policy Programme	---