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JOINT MEETING MEMBER STATES AND STAKEHOLDERS, BRUSSELS

EU SCHOOL FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND MILK SCHEME: TAKING STOCK AFTER THE FIRST SCHOOL YEAR

CONCLUSIONS

We are looking back at an enriching day where we all have learnt from one another, under the chairmanship of **Luis Carazo-Jiménez**. Our exchanges took place in the largest Commission meeting room and were webstreamed to reach the widest possible audience.

The focus of the day was very much on healthy eating habits, an objective that is common to all institutions and stakeholders, on which dialogue is paramount.

Maria Giulia Medico recalled the main elements of the new scheme, highlighting some first results.

Member States authorities shared their experience. We heard **Judit Benedics** from Austria, **Monika Niewarowska** from Poland, **Maeve Lynch** together with **Tara Regan** from the Dairy Council, from Ireland. They gave us very good examples of cooperation across administrations to enhance the healthier aspect of the milk part of the scheme: replace chocolate milk by plain milk and reconnect children with the taste of natural products. We even heard a piece of music by children for children.

Healthier together? Yes, under **Mike Mackenzie's** expert moderation, we discussed health aspects and simplification

Attila Balogh drew our attention to the High-level group on nutrition and physical activity and the EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health. He note the increased focus on healthy diet in the CAP.

Nicola Pisano from **Freshfel** drove us through an initiative to increase fresh fruit and vegetables consumption, known as the Thematic Network.

Going local? Yes. **Fabien Santini** described the different local food systems and short supply chains within the EU, which can be expressed in terms of distance but also in the number of intermediaries and so on.

Alexandra Marie explained the focus on quality and organic products in the French school scheme through differentiated support, dialogue and educational measures.

And what about involving teachers? **Laura Gennaro** in charge of educational measures under the school scheme in Italy gave us an insight into educational measures involving teachers, dispelling fallacies and false myths about milk, making children try unknown food. We even had a live fruit tasting exercise.

And what about involving parents? **Arja Krauchenberg** recalled that parents can do a lot to make home and school pull in the same direction.

Stefan Storcksdieck from the Joint Research Centre introduced its work on an inventory of food-based dietary guidelines that can serve as a useful basis for procurement procedures, developing food policies, etc. He announced the publication by the end of the year of a database where Member States recommendations will be readily visible.

Christina Gerstgrasser explained the reasons for monitoring and evaluation needs in the EU school scheme. They allow justifying how taxpayers' money is used, learning from past experience and increasing transparency.

Did we make it simpler? The exchange of views showed that there have undoubtedly been simplification efforts, but that a lot depends on concrete implementation at Member States' level. During that session that was particularly lively with a lot of participants taking the floor, the idea was expressed to organise ad hoc groups to exchange practices.

Enrico Riberi gave the auditors' point of view on aspects to pay attention to for a proper operation of the EU school scheme. He gave useful tips to all.

Our Deputy Director General, **Rudi Moegele**, was right in his opening address: there is a saying "anything that can go wrong will go wrong" but it did not materialise for the school scheme. Today's meeting showed that:

- The balance of products is maintained and all MS participate.
- The health and educational dimension is enhanced.
- On the milk side, Member States' health authorities endorse the choice of products with a special eye on added salt, sugar and fat.
- The possibility is given to go local, prioritise short supply chain, organic products for the freshness of the products, but also low carbon footprint, creating outlets and fairer prices for local communities without endangering the functioning of the single market.
- The scheme helps reconnect not only children with farming but also teachers, without forgetting the crucial role of parents.
- There have been starting difficulties but today's situation gives a positive overview of implementation.

Today gave us the opportunity to hear about **Commissioner Hogan's** support to the conference, while he was kept away due to other commitments. Attention was drawn to the growing place of nutrition in the agricultural policy, including in the Commission's CAP post-2020 proposals.

With all the knowledge gathered today, no doubt that we will do even better in the future. Two persons in particular have been mentioned by participants: **Maria Giulia Medico** and **Judit Krommer**. Those are the two outstanding artisans of the school scheme who deserve the warmest applause at the end of such a successful day!

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