



Brussels,
AGRI/

MINUTES

Meeting of the CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP “QUALITY”

26 March 2024

QUALITY 9:30-12:30

Chair: Deputy Head of Unit DG AGRI Unit F.3 – Geographical indications

1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting in question was non-public.

3. List of points discussed

1. New Regulation on Geographical Indications (GI)

a. State of play on timing, including secondary legislation - Presentation by the Commission

The co-legislators reached a political agreement on 24th October 2023. The text is now in the final stages with formal adoption by the co-legislators planned during the plenary of the Parliament on the 11th of April. It will enter into force around May, 20 days after it is published.

The new act gives the Commission a few empowerments regarding secondary legislation. The basic act will enter into force while the secondary legislation is still in the works, but the GI system will continue to operate with the current secondary legislation.

On the secondary legislation timing, the Commission has a rule that prohibits bundling. This means that when the Commission has empowerments in different basic acts, it cannot adopt one delegated act and one implementing act. The Commission will have one implementing regulation for all three sectors, food, wine, and spirit drinks, because all the empowerments are in the new basic act. However, for the delegated regulation, the Commission still has some empowerments both in the spirit drinks and in the wine regulations, which is the CMO. Therefore, there will be 3 delegated regulations.

The main delegated regulation will cover all three sectors to the extent possible with the prohibition of bundling. It will cover essentially the procedure for standard and temporary amendments. The other two delegated regulations that the Commission will adopt are simply to repeal the spirit drinks delegated regulation and to delete the provisions that are no longer necessary in the existing wine delegated regulation.

In the unique implementing regulation, it will obviously repeal the existing ones, delete the no-longer necessary provisions in the wine implementing regulation, and it will contain most of the secondary rules necessary for the system to function: procedures for registration, opposition, Union amendments, standard amendments, temporary amendments, cancellation, rules on the Union register, rules on attestation of compliance, and the same for Traditional Specialty Guaranteed, also rules on labelling and communication between the Commission and the Member States and stakeholders.

On timing, the Commission has already sent a very rough draft (the text is posted on the transparency register) of all those secondary legislation to Member States in the committees and discussed with them early February. The Commission took the comments from MS into account and revised the text, which has been sent to the MS for a second conversation on 10th April. The Commission will again implement the comments and will discuss with the MS around 13th June. The June meeting should be the first meeting of the one unique Geographical Indication Committee that is being created for all three sectors. At that time, the Commission should have quite a stable text for the secondary legislation.

The Commission intends to have the texts voted in September in committee and send for scrutiny to the co-legislators, including the new Parliament so that everything is adopted and running for the new year.

The voluntary sustainability report from producer groups will be published on the GI View, which is a database where producer groups can add information on their registered GI. The Commission will not publish those reports anywhere else.

COGECA on GI View: will there be institutional checks/monitoring on these reports?

Commission replies that according to the Basic Act, the Commission will only publish the sustainability reports and will not verify them, nor provide feedback or templates. These will be the sole responsibility of the producer groups.

SAFE Food Advocacy Europe would like to flag up the arisen project “GISMART”, which is a sustainability project of quality schemes. It is about looking into establishing criteria and looking at different sustainability issues. SAFE Food Advocacy Europe invites to participate in this rising project, to work together to build a sustainability system at a joint level to ensure more equivalence across Europe. It would not be up to individual producers or producers’ organisations to work with its own schemes and standards.

SAFE Food Advocacy - chat: “The certification bodies have the number of hectares, of companies involved, of certified product for each year and each month. They ask whether it would be possible to have the Horizon GISMART project presented at the next civil dialogue group.”

Commission is aware of this project that is ongoing. The Commission will work with the sectors on these reports in the longer term. For the moment, it will be a voluntary system from the producer groups.

b. Indication on the producer on GI labels: considerations from the spirit drinks' sector.

spiritsEUROPE would like to raise major concerns for their sector on the amendment to article 37.3a. It seems that in the last political trilogue, this article has been changed so that it is now required that spirit drinks GIs provide the name of the producer in the same field of vision as the GI itself.

spiritsEUROPE has on the one hand procedural concerns and on the other hand practical challenges from that new paragraph. spiritsEUROPE hopes that the Commission will support the sector in the months and years to come.

The procedural concerns: no impact assessment on rather substantial change of the text has ever been conducted about the implications of the new requirement. The sector would have appreciated to be consulted, especially given that the GI revision has been one of the key files for the sector in the past years and spiritsEUROPE has been an active stakeholder.

The practical concerns: On the one hand, there is no definition of producers for spirit drinks. The production of spirit drinks is very complex and it is not easy, and in many cases impossible, to establish who the producer is. The new regulation does not clarify if the name of the producer needs to be mentioned every time as the GI is mentioned or it would be sufficient that it is mentioned one time.

On both points, spiritsEUROPE would like to see the support of the Commission and of the MS, especially for the definition of the producer. Spirit drinks are very complex products, not only when it comes to the production as such but also in terms of new requirements. The sector has its own regulations, the product of the spirit drinks has many steps. For instance, there is the raw material process, the fermentation, the preparation, the maturation, and the blending in case of blended spirits and then the ageing and the bottling. And then there is the placing on the market. It is an interplay with many stakeholders on the production chain, so it is impossible to say who is the producer as such.

The other problem is that especially the small and medium size enterprises have special contractual agreements with supermarkets for instance, for the so called "white label" products. It would not be in the interest of the producer or the party selling the spirit drink to the supermarket to be mentioned. It is impossible to identify who that would be, and it would also be often forbidden by the contractual agreement.

On the logo being on the same field of vision as the GI, spiritsEUROPE would like to clarify how often that would need to be the case, and if just one time would be sufficient.

spiritsEUROPE asks the Commission to help clarifying those provisions and produce an interpretative note that the producer can be interpreted in a very wide way and that it would be sufficient to mention the name of the producer once in the same field of vision as the GI.

spiritsEUROPE is trying to gather the support of the other MS for their request. It raised the concern in the MS and sent a letter to the agricultural ministers.

Commission is aware of this last-minute change, which has an impact on the spirit drink sector, and thanks spiritsEUROPE for sharing the concerns. The Commission is reflecting how this new provision will have to be implemented. It was indeed a strong wish of the co-legislator that the producer's name be indicated on the label in the same field of vision as the GI name to promote the producer in the value chain and give it a more prominent role. Commission cannot promise an interpretative note but is looking into it.

CELCAA - Chat: "Art. 37 (5): we are fully share the concerns of the spirit sector. The new rule creates also severe problems for all foodstuffs.

Question 1: Is the rule also applicable to unpackaged foods?

Question 2: What is the reason that the wording was changed at the very end from "in the same field of vision as the Union Symbol" to "in the same field of vision as the GI"?

Question 3: Art. 27 (4) what is the reason that this article shall not apply to spirit drinks?

EU NZ Agreement: yesterday it was published in the OJ that the new text is published in the OJ L 2024/866, but this text is not available in the OJ - where is the new text available?

COGECA fully supports what spiritsEUROPE said with regards to the difficulties that this imposes on producers of alcoholic and spiritual beverages. For a solution to be found as quickly as possible, to avoid any legal complications, COGECA fully supports what was said.

Commission duly notes this.

2. Status report on GI files

The Commission received a request from one of the members of the group to give a report on statistics. The Commission can generate quite a lot of statistics on GI files and tried to answer the question, with a focus on direct applications from the EU and third countries (not including bilateral agreements or Geneva Act recognition). If this is not enough, members are invited to react and the Commission will present more statistics at a future meeting. The presentation is shared with members of the CDG on the circabc group. The presentation covers the number of GIs directly registered in the EU to date, per MS and per sector. It also details the number of applications received in 2023, including direct new registrations and different types of amendments, per MS, as well as the number of applications finalised by the Commission in 2023. Finally, the Commission presented statistics on the number of ongoing applications.

SAFE Food Advocacy would be interested to receive some information on the actual production of these GI registrations in terms of numbers of hectares of production. This would be useful to understand the impact of these GI registrations and to verify the environmental measures, regional development, and consumption (number of consumers).

Commission regularly publishes studies on the economic value of GIs – latest study was published in 2020 (data 2017). A new work will be launched with the contractor to

update the study, it will be based on 2023 data. **Commission** will reflect whether a possible update can be provided to this group on past studies in the next CDG in June.

For next CDG in June, **Commission** would invite members to come forward with examples of sustainable practices for GIs (in terms of economic, social or environmental sustainability). **Commission** hopes to give a presentation on the packaging Regulation and possibly some other Regulation from DG ENV and CLIMA.

3. List of participants

ORGANISATIONS
ASSEMBLÉE DES RÉGIONS EUROPÉENNES FRUITIÈRES LÉGUMIÈRES ET HORTICOLES (AREFLH)
ASSOCIATION DES RÉGIONS EUROPÉENNES DES PRODUITS D'ORIGINE (AREPO)
EUROPEAN LIAISON COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD TRADE (CELCAA)
EUROPEAN CONFEDERATION OF MAIZE PRODUCERS (CEPM)
EUROPEAN AGRI-COOPERATIVES (COGECA)
EUROPEAN FARMERS (COPA)
EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR PLANT-BASED FOODS (EAPF)
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF ORIGIN WINES (EFOW)
EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ELARD)
EUROPEAN RURAL POULTRY ASSOCIATION / ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DE VOLAILLES RURALES (ERPA)
EUROPEAN POTATO TRADE ASSOCIATION (EUROPATAT)
FARMHOUSE AND ARTISAN CHEESE AND DAIRY PRODUCERS' EUROPEAN NETWORK (FACENETWORK)
FOODDRINKEUROPE (FOODDRINKEUROPE)
FRESHFEL EUROPE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE MOVEMENTS EUROPEAN REGIONAL GROUP (IFOAM)
ORGANISATION POUR UN RÉSEAU INTERNATIONAL D'INDICATIONS GÉOGRAPHIQUES (ORIGINEU)
SAFE FOOD ADVOCACY EUROPE (SAFE EUROPE)
SLOW FOOD
TRADE PROMOTION EUROPE (TPE)

OBSERVERS
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE