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FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group Forestry & Cork of 28/11/2018

Chair: Lennart ACKZELL, European Agri-Cooperatives (COGECA)

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT), the European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs (ENFE) and the WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO).

1. Approval of the agenda (and of the minutes of previous meeting¹)

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public.

3. List of points discussed [Name of each point, one by one]

3.1 Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting and of the agenda

3.2 Elections of the chairmanship of the CDG of Forestry and Cork

The Commission presented the procedures for the elections and ask the three candidates to present themselves: Lennart Ackzell (Cogeca)- for the position of chair, Marten Larsson (CEPI) for the position of vice-chair and Kelsey Perlman (EEB)- for the vice-chair. From the 38 members present at the meeting for the chair position there were two abstentions, for the first vice-chair (Marten Larsson) two abstention and for the second vice-chair (Kelsey Perlman) one abstention.

3.3 Presentation and exchange of views on the EC Communication on “A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment

¹ If not adopted by written procedure (CIRCABC)

The European Commission made a presentation on this point that is available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

CEPI stressed that the new bioeconomy strategy is a good step forward. They have also underlined that the Commission is working on the 2050 strategy on climate change and the importance of bioeconomy in tackling climate change is crucial.

They stated that even if a strong commitment for the Bio-Based Industry (BBI) is missing in the strategy they hope that this partnership will continue also in the future. They welcomed the call for cooperation for the mobilization of sustainable biomass. They also mentioned that it is important to support sustainability and innovation driven investments and not subsidies driven ones.

They have highlighted the importance of having good connections with other parts of the world such as Canada and Japan on this important topic. When the ecological boundaries are discussed it is important to take into account the changing conditions linked to climate change.

CEPF stressed that sustainable use of wood it is crucial and that forest owners are not growing trees only for one purpose. They have asked what will happen with the strategy after 2020 and also what is the link with the Commission proposal on sustainable financing.

They welcomed the updated strategy and were pleased that the strategy acknowledges the sustainable use of raw materials in the EU. Furthermore, CEPF welcomed the link to the goals of the Paris Agreement and the acknowledgement of the importance of building with wood from the climate perspective. However, CEPF would have like to see even more concrete links to the objectives of the European Commission proposal for CAP Strategic Plans Regulation. In addition, it noted that actions on ecological boundaries should not hamper the development of moving away from fossil-based societies to a circular bioeconomy ones.

Copa welcomed the fact that the bioeconomy will be developed further in EU with the new strategy and its action plan. They consider that EU has a great opportunity to use the sustainable use of biomass. They also stressed that we are facing a lot of challenges for which the bioeconomy provides solutions such as fighting against climate change.

They have asked also what is the state of the play on the work of the Knowledge Center on Bioeconomy and what is the future of the bioeconomy stakeholder panel. They have stressed the importance of ensuring policy coherence taking into account that bioeconomy is also a priority in the future CAP. As regards the future BBI, they consider that primary producers should be an important partner.

They have asked also how the pilots mentioned in the strategy will be financed, if money from the thematic innovation platform (and not from RD funds for example) could be used.

EURAF underlined one important point from the strategy on the lack of information on biomass availability. In addition, they have mentioned that agroforestry it is important also in the context of bioeconomy and that the strategy needs to be broad and include also this part of the sector. They also mentioned that the Commission works to define the

ecological footprint of various sectors (this is included also in the strategy) and that for the moment there is no wood industry participation on the PEF.

ELO asked how we can better use the forest increment and have also the economic aspects regarding the access biomass better addressed. They said also that today we have contradicting policies in EU such as the climate and environmental policies.

Viacampesina asked the Commission how many national bioeconomy strategies have been approved?

EEB underlined that we are all aware of the importance of biodiversity and there is a risk of a negative impact if we are promoting new products that compete with current ones. They stress that there is a need for knowledge and research to see if is sustainable what we do.

CEETTAR pleaded for more bio-economy, as a way to keep and create additional rural jobs and to ensure landscape maintenance. The Commission does not sufficiently addresses the economic, environmental and societal benefits of the bio-economy, as compared to other energy sectors, such as coal, plastic, concrete and nuclear energy. The following elements should be further developed in the Communication: recent developments on new products harvested, questions about soil fertility, machinery and soil compaction, as well as the whole debate on production methods. Finally yet importantly, it is essential to harmonize the definition of bio economical products in all EU Members states, as they can be defined as waste or by-products.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission is not prescribing any solution regarding the use of wood and they promote a long-term use. Even when the Commission is mentioning the cascade, the implementation of this concept depends on the local conditions and on market approaches.

Regarding the strategy after 2020, there will no possibility to revise the strategy on 2020. On the PEF is it up to the industry to be part of this process.

On the biomass mobilisation and availability, JRC is working on this and what is the impact on the use of waste, residues etc.

On agroforestry there is a pilot in the list of actions but the Commission will check and come back with more details on this.

There is no action as such on communication but the communication it is integrated in different actions.

Bioeconomy is providing an opportunity to integrate the primary producers in the value chains to have diversification of the farming activities including their income. The Commission agreed that the link between CAP and bioeconomy is key

The intention for sustainable investments is to create a label for the green investments.

The chair concluded that this topic is extremely broad and all organizations will be affected and therefore all relevant stakeholders need to be involved. He stressed also that it is important to look at the national strategies and how we put our ambitious actions in practice.

3.4 Presentation and exchange of views on the **future CAP and the role of forestry**

The Commission made a presentation that is available on CIRCABC and they have stressed that there is a mistake regarding the part of the text on forestry management plans that should include the same provisions that we have in the current rural development policy.

Questions from the members

ELO asked what will happen in the future as the second pillar is under pressure and for sure forestry will be affected. They have asked to pay a more specific attention on funding for forestry. They stressed that the sector is facing a lot of extreme events but is also playing a crucial role in tackling climate change. They mentioned also that a lot of small farmers need the RD support to keep rural areas viable.

EURAF noted that three EU countries had removed their support for forestry from the CAP (Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands) and this could lead to compartmentalised thinking between forestry and agriculture. They asked if this practice will continue to be permitted in the future.

Another issue raised was the need to record landscape features (many of which are strips of trees) consistently in the national IACS/LPIS systems..

CEPF asked for intervention funding thresholds for forestry. They also stressed that ANCs are very important and should be continue to be well supported. Social objectives need also to be addressed.

They also mentioned that the budget it is of a big concern mainly the decrease of the RD funds. They support the increase of budget under Horizon Europe cluster 5. They also stressed that there should be no mandatory forestry management plans for smaller holdings.

Copa stressed that appropriate indicators that are reflecting all pillars of SFM are important. They have also stressed the importance of simplification as they are not convinced that the current proposal will bring simplification at national level.

For the calamities that we have today, such as bark beetle, measures are not flexible enough and they are not simple. They stressed that we need a proper programme that it is fit for purpose and also a better coordination.

Cogeca highlight the fact that forestry research is currently under DG Research and that they consider that it is important to be under DG Agri's responsibilities as agriculture. In addition, they have underlined the importance of ensuring more coherence between the European rural networks and that they hope to see more topics on forestry in the future. They have mentioned also the fact that the ANCs should continue to be part of the agri-environment intervention.

Answers from the Commission

On the MFF, the Commission does not know how the discussion will develop but they mentioned that since the beginning the intention was to decrease the budget. MS will decide on the division of the budget on the various actions and measures. In the current

programming period, it was the MS's decision not to use RD money for forestry measures but to provide support using state aid.

Regarding the indicators, the Commission needs to establish common indicators to be used in the whole UE and MS can also develop their own indicators. We have to pay attention to this topic as reporting is posing already difficulties for some MS for example on the afforested area.

On a possible threshold, this kind of possibilities are open if MS like to address specific aspects including social aspects.

The Commission agrees with the importance of the budget from research and innovation to provide support to forestry sector to face current and future challenges.

Concerning the forest management plans, Commission confirmed once again that the flexibility will be given to the MS regarding the size of the forest holding.

On measure regarding forest protection if the MS open measures 8.3 or 8.4 this is activated from the moment of the calamity and the actions can start. Therefore, the Commission does not see any issue on this.

The Commission said that it is important to communicate what was simplified. Gold plating was practice by the MS and this brought also additional controls.

The Commission mentioned that the new delivery model can be interesting but at the same time challenging. They have underlined that we have to face also the reality on what is feasible and possible.

On landscape features the Commission is doing its best to use the information available including Copernicus.

The chair concluded that the CDG members need all to be actively involved in this discussion to make sure that forestry measures will be included in the future CAP strategic plans.

3.5 Exchange of views on the **guidance document on the cascading use of biomass**

The European Commission made a presentation on this point that is available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

CEPI welcomed the guidance document that they consider is coming at the right time as we have important policy debates for the future of the sector. They consider that what is missing from the guidance document are MS examples, how they prevent wasting material that can become an important resource in the bioeconomy. They have asked what are the next steps on the guidance apart from its translation.

CEI-Bois welcomed the guidance and they are happy that the focus is on a market -based approach. They consider that what is missing is the sourcing of the wood.

CEPF stressed that this is a crucial issue for forest owners and they welcomed that the guidance is non-binding, not promoting a hierarchy approach and does not include wood mobilisation. However, it is an opportunity that the guidance aims at explaining how

markets could be improved. They stress that we have to pay attention that this does not have counterproductive effects. They have also asked what's next.

COPA welcomed also the guidance document as it is important to know what cascade is. For them the most important thing is that there is no market disturbance when using such an approach.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission mentioned that it is important that forest owners need to educate the market. In this regard, labelling serves as a good example on how to inform consumers and create demand. Regarding next steps, the document will be translated in all EU languages, promoted at various conferences as possible and disseminated to the Permanent Representations.

The Commission appreciates the efforts that are put in SFM.

The chair concluded by thanking the Commission once again for the good work and mentioning that the group looks forward to continue working on this topic.

3.6 Roadmap for the Evaluation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy

The European Commission made a presentation on this point that is available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

CEPF asked what are the Commission intentions after 2020.

ELO asked if cost-benefit analyses were done on how many resources we have used including financial resources to see also how much we have spent in EU on biodiversity. They stressed also that forest owners are protecting their forest and that too much money are spend on administrative procedures. They mentioned that forest owners need support in specific projects and that more intensive work needs to be done.

EEB highlighted the importance of the evaluation. They asked what will be expected from the assessment of indirect drivers, why the policy failed; and maybe showing the link to other policies.

They also underlined that they hope that we can continue to discuss about sustainable land use also in the future

.COPA stressed that climate change is the main driver for the negative impact on biodiversity.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission explained that the post-2020 biodiversity framework will build on the findings of the evaluation, including what had been successful approaches and where and why we have failed to deliver on the biodiversity objectives;

Important insights already exist from the mid-term review of the Biodiversity Strategy (2015) and the Fitness Check of the EU Nature Directives (2016).

In shaping the future EU biodiversity policy, we need to take into account the global post-2020 biodiversity framework, which is under development (CBD); links with the SDGs and climate change. We also need to work on mainstreaming with key sectors, and raise awareness on how much we depend on nature for our wellbeing and socio-economic development.

The analysis of the costs and benefits of investing in nature and biodiversity will be done under the evaluation of efficiency. Efficiency of the policy a lot depends on what and how the money were invested, and not only how much.

The Commission also reminded that biodiversity support measures under the CAP are the main source of funding for nature and biodiversity. This will be subject of an evaluation in 2019.

The impact assessment of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 and the mid-term review already referred to indirect drivers and conflicting interests and policy objectives. To the extent possible, the evaluation will look into the impacts of EU consumption and production patterns – including on global biodiversity.

Climate change is an increasing threat to biodiversity but it is also driven by human activities. It is not a reason to ignore other pressures but it adds to them. We need to look at mitigation across economic sectors, and also at how to protect and restore ecosystems in order to make them more resilient to climate change; and how ecosystem services can contribute to carbon sequestration, and to help adaptation including reducing the impacts of extreme events such as droughts, floods, storms and heat waves.

The chair concluded that we need to continue to discuss on this important topic and see how we work together on this.

3.7 Upcoming Guidance on the ecosystem service in decision making

3.8 Report on the implementation of the EU Green Infrastructure Strategy and upcoming Guidance on strategic EU level green and blue infrastructure

The Commission presented these points together and the presentation is available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

EURAF stressed that agroforestry contributes a lot to biodiversity and this needs to be taken into account.

ELO underlined the complexity that was mentioned in the presentation and that they are concerned about the guidance without knowing exactly what is behind. Wording is very important.

Copa asked if market based approach for ecosystem services is included in the guidance document.

CEPF asked if the draft could be circulated before its final adoption as forest owners are the ones implementing the actions. They have asked about the link between the guidance on safe ecological limits mentioned in the EU bioeconomy strategy and the guidance presented.

Viacampesina asked if the issue of pesticide is addressed and they have mentioned also the issue on antibiotics in the water.

EURAF asked how we can award farmers on for the contribution they make to ecosystem services if landscape features are not recorded on a farm by farm level.

CEPF underlined that targets and action plans are important but there is no budget and forest owners are paying for them.

Answers from the Commission

The Commission mentioned that there will be a section in the guidance document on ecosystems and their services in sustainable farming and forestry; the link to the CAP will be there.

While ecosystems are complex systems, and there is no blueprint for the integration of ecosystems and their services across decisions, complexity should not be a reason to neglect this important issue but to engage in mutual learning.

The guidance is not prescriptive. It refers to existing knowledge while stressing that more knowledge and data is needed. Ecosystems and their services need to be considered in a long-term perspective. The guidance will provide the structure of future work. An online platform will be developed in 2019 to offer resources, tools and training targeted to the needs of specific groups.

The guidance document will not address specific pressures in detail. On pesticides, work is underway on the evaluation of the EU legislation on pesticides, and there is reflection on related risk assessments. The intention of the guidance envisaged in the bioeconomy strategy is to strengthen knowledge on ecological limits and a safe operating space for humanity.

The guidance document on ecosystems and their services will be adopted early next year and there will be no second round of consultation with stakeholders. The comments received in the consultation in 2018 have been carefully considered.

References and resources on Payments for ecosystem services will be included in the guidance, and the online guidance will also seek to mobilise further examples of PES.

The launched evaluation of the CAP impacts on biodiversity will look at various financial aspects.

The chair concluded that we need to continue to discuss on this important topic and see how we can work together on this.

3.9 EU actions addressing extreme events

Two presentations were provided by the Commission that are available on CIRCABC.

Questions from the members

CEPF mentioned that in Latvia when fires started in protected areas they got big and spread very fast due also to lack of infrastructure and water. They have asked if there are any missions that could be organized in these areas.

Copa stressed that the focus was only on forest fires but there are major issues with storms that have drastic effects such as the bark beetle. They have asked if the solidarity fund could cover this kind of calamities?

CEPI mentioned that in Sweden they had an issue with forest fires due to forestry operations. They have stressed that active forest management is crucial in managing risks.

Cogeca highlighted that the Commission is following the same steps that Portugal followed and this is not right way. We need to take into account that European territory is changing rapidly. Land abandonment, growing forest areas, accumulation of biomass in wood or shrubs vegetation create a different scenario that we are used with.

They stressed that the question is more when will occur in densely populated areas. They underlined that fires must be prevented and the territory must be managed. Furthermore, climate change is occurring and extreme events also.

The protection of people should be a priority and currently they consider that this is not yet consider a crucial issue by the Commission.

Answer from the Commission

Mission are organized at the request of the MS and the terms are defined by them. In the forest fires meetings the Commission discussed various issues with MS and also every year an event is organized on lessons learn including what can be improved. DG Regio is responsible for the solidarity fund and cannot intervene in the type of incidents mentioned by Copa; maybe DG Sante.

The Commission also stressed the importance of sustainable forest management.

DG Environment and the JRC organized the Expert Group on Forest Fires that met in Castilla Leon, that is a region struggling with land abandonment and biomass accumulation, and discussed about forest fires. Land abandonment will affect more policy areas and this is a challenge that the Commission is aware off and which is a very complex issue.

The Commission stressed that this is a complex issue and first steps have been taken but more needs to be done, but this in cooperation with Member States.

The chair concluded by saying that the important issue for the forestry sector has to be dealt at all level.

3.10 2050 Strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reductions

The Commission made an oral presentation on this point.

Following the invitation by the European Council and the European Parliament the European Commission prepared a long-term strategy. In the Communication adopted by the Commission Chapter 6 covers agriculture and forestry. This Communication is not a legislative proposal. There are a number of scenarios and there will be the possibility to discuss on them.

In addition, the Commission mentioned that on this topic there will be an European Summit in Sibiu on 9 May.

The Commission mentioned that the Communication looks in all sectors and what they can do in the reducing the emissions.

They have underlined that there is a specific part on the Bioeconomy and that the biomass has an important role to play. In addition, in all scenarios there is an increase use of biomass.

They stressed also that in chapter 6, an important point for agricultural sector is the use of technology, such as precision agriculture, the optimisation of the use of inputs and also the role of research and innovation on sustainable intensification.

Questions from the members

CEPI mentioned that even it is very early to comment fully on this vision, for their industry they welcome it and the fact that bioeconomy strategy is strongly embedded in this strategy to get the emissions down. The stated also that carbon sink and reduction of emissions needs to be brought together as this is crucial for sectors who do not do well their homework.

The link with SDG is important – how you link the strategy with the SDGs?

CEI-bois stressed that there is a lot on emphasis on biomass use for bioenergy and that the use of wood for other purposes could have been highlighted more in the bioeconomy part.

Viacampesina underlined that this could put pressure on forests and that this could be problematic. This could push for large scale and they see the risk that small farmers will be affected. They stressed that there is a need to understand how forests are managed in different MS and that human rights perspective is also important.

EEB mentioned that restoration and afforestation is important and that they are worried on bioenergy. They stressed also that we need to be realistic on the objectives of the strategy. They have asked what will be the format for a stakeholder platform to present their views?

UEF highlighted the importance of coherence between different policy as this is an important issue linked also to biodiversity.

Copa considers that this is a very good approach to reduce fossil emissions but they see as a problem to store fossil carbon in forest. The forests stand will increase, will be older and older and the risk of storm will have a huge impact. For Copa this is not a solution to

store carbon in forests as the wood needs to be used and at the same time the rotation period needs to be reduced so that the wood can be used earlier.

Answers from the Commission

We are looking at the use of biomass for various uses. Improving the sink is important and at the same time reducing emissions in other sectors.

With regards to the comments on bioenergy, the Commission mentioned that construction with wood is mentioned few times and how they help to substitute fossil-based materials. On the imports we have already done a lot of work in the RED II.

The Commission mentioned also that they are aware of the human rights issues and that there is also a chapter on economic and social aspects mainly on rural development.

The Commission referred also to the importance of ensuring food security and the link with the difficulties with reduction of emissions in agriculture sector.

With regards to the next steps, the first half of 2019 will be dedicated to a debate on this Communication.

The Commission stressed the importance of ensuring policy coherence and that the Communication contributes to the SDGs.

The Commission underlined also the importance of adaptation to climate as we need to find the right balanced.

The chair concluded that the CDG will for sure come back to this important point in the next meeting as forests have an important role to play in tackling climate change.

AOB

Copa raised the point regarding the future of the CDG and the study on the analysis of the CDG that will be conducted in 2019. The results of the study would be presented and would be an input for any restructuring of the CDG in the light of the CAP reform.

The Commission informed the members that in the coming weeks the Commission will launch a consultation in the context of sustainable finance on the criteria for sustainable finance for forest-based sector.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

Please see the conclusions for each point on the agenda.

5. Next steps

For the next meeting the following points could be included on the agenda: the state of play on the future CAP, Sustainable finance (that was not presented in this meeting), evaluation of the Biodiversity Strategy, 2050 Strategy, next steps on the EU Bioeconomy strategy

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 12 July 2019.

7. List of participants - Annex

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."

List of participants– Minutes

*Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group Forestry & Cork
of 28/11/2018*

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NAME	FIRST NAME
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	ALFSEN	Ellen
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	GRASMANE	Aiga
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	MAYR	Marian lajos
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	OLIVIER	Bertrand
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	SANS	Ignasi
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	SILJAMA	Meri
Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers (CEPF)	TENHIÄLÄ	Satu-marja
Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI)	LARSSON	Mårten
Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI)	LEBERLE	Ulrich
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	ACKZELL	Lennart
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	DÓSA	Ildikó
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	GESZPRYCH	Marek
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	JÕEÄÄR	Priit
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	SAMBOLEK	Robert
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	LAWSON	Gerry
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	PANTERA	Anastasia
European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois)	MELEGARI	Silvia
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	MAMMANA	Ivan
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	PAIVA	Rita

European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	AXELSSON	Filip
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	KUBLI	Martin
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	POZZUTO	Gianmarco
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	PERLMAN	Kelsey
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	TOOPAKKA	Liisa
European farmers (COPA)	CALLIARI	Gabriele
European farmers (COPA)	CASTILLA BARÓ	José maría
European farmers (COPA)	HAKKARAINEN	Juha
European farmers (COPA)	HOEBARTH	Martin
European farmers (COPA)	NEAGU	Oana
European farmers (COPA)	SOVERAL	João
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	BUDIL	Bernhard
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	GAIZUTIS	Algis
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	JANSKY	Stanislav
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	SILVEIRA	Pedro
European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors (CEETTAR)	HELOU	Tammouz Eñaut
European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)	VIRS	Peteris
Federation Europeenne des Communes Forestieres (FECOF)	LESTURGEZ	Alain
IFOAM EU Group	SLABE	Anamarija
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	KEISS	Oskars
UNION DE SELVICULTORES DEL SUR DE EUROPA, AEIE (USSE)	ALTUNA	Gorka
UNION DE SELVICULTORES DEL SUR DE EUROPA, AEIE (USSE)	SALABERRIA	Leire
Union of European Foresters (UEF)	DIEMER	Michael