

Final Minutes
Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group “Quality & Promotion”
Date: 9 March 2021 (via Interactio)

Chair: Mrs RUBBI (SACAR)

Organisations present: All Organisations present (except Eurocoop and WWF) as per list in Annex

Approval of the agenda: Agenda is approved. Minutes need to be provided in the next 10 days.

Nature of the meeting: The meeting was non-public. Meeting was for the appointed CDG organizations and was not webstream.

Policy points discussed during the CDG Quality Policy and Promotion

Session on Promotion

1. Revision of the Promotion Policy and Upcoming consultation - Presentation by Mr Bruno de Oliveira Alves (AGRI B1)

The Commission presents the background of the policy review based on 5 input concepts which will influence the review:

- F2F on sustainable agricultural production and consumption
- Europe’s beating cancer plan with implication for alcohol drinks and other food diet.
- Eurobarometer 505 on Food fit for the Future and expectation of citizens. Taste, food safety and price drive food purchases. Consumers believe that Cie should raise sustainability standards.
- EU trade policy review concluding that focus should be made on promoting the sustainability and quality of products traded.
- Policy evaluation leading to request of improved coherence, improve exchange of knowledge, and make greater use of EU signature.

These aspects influenced the policy options identified in the Roadmap and the initial inception impact assessment for the policy review. The Roadmap is not replacing the public consultation to take place later. On the Roadmap, there is already 75 responses. The Roadmap is the initial step to assist the Commission to evaluate if they have taken on board all the different policy options. For the time being 3 policy options were identified (building on current policy, focus on policy scope and review conditionality/eligibility - being the evolution of the other two). There is also a streamlining intent of the implementation model with the idea moving towards more direct management. The roadmap is in Q1 of 2021 with the launch of the public

consultation for 12 weeks. In Q2 and Q3 a conference of stakeholders will take place in July and the completion of the Impact Assessment in October and discussion with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board at the end of the year to lead to legislative proposal in Q1 in 2022. The Commission is calling stakeholders to take part to the public consultation.

Comments from the delegates:

- The General aim of the current regulation is the competitiveness of the agriculture. Is this principle to be removed/abolished and substitute by other principles such as F2F and EU cancer beating plan. Is there a connection of those principle with the objective of competitiveness? The Commission can not at this stage anticipate the outcome of the consultation. The Treaty takes into account the competitiveness and include raising awareness of quality scheme but could include arising topics on sustainability. Those aspects will raise the competitiveness. So, there is no incompatibility. The roadmap makes clear that competitiveness of farmers/growers is still a key parameter. However, with the momentum of the reform, the Commission will aim at improving the coherence with other (new) policy objectives or strategies.
- The direct link between the consumption of meat and cancer is not supported by strong scientific evidence as it is also mentioned by the WHO.
- The Commission mentioned the need for scientific data to support our positions on the review of the Promotion Policy, but on what basis can the Commission demonstrate that some specific sectors do or do not contribute to the Farm to Fork objectives.
- Importance of keeping promotion strong given the multiple challenges of agriculture sector (COVID, Brexit, Mercosur, US sanctions...). Those aspects need to be considered.
- Clarification about the option 3 and criteria that the Commission could use to demonstrate that sector contribute or not the F2F strategy or EU beating cancer plan (and link to WHO study on impact of meat/processed meat on NCD). The link to the Treaty objective should in any case remain.
- It is challenging to define what is sustainability. No clear and unique definition.
- Interrelation between competitiveness and beating cancer: this is a matter of policy coherence. Social sustainability and more balanced diet (plant based).

2. Report of the Commission to the Council and to the Parliament - Presentation by Mrs Varvara Bektasiadou (AGRI B1)

The Report of the Commission to the Council and Parliament is a “short” document of 12 pages on the Implementation of promotion policy from 2016 to 2019 with review of AWP, submission and selection process and review of Commission own initiative. Some recommendations (effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value) are provided. The report has mostly findings demonstrating the effectiveness and relevance with EU added value. It provides also some recommendations in regard to climate debate, sustainability and policy coherence (F2F, EU beating cancer plan,..) and support efforts to position EU system in a global environment.

3. Selection Decision 2020 – Presentation by Mrs Aleksandra Mecilosek (CHAFEA)

This point includes a presentation by CHAFEA about the final uptake and statistics of the call and the related difficulties for evaluation reporting and the COVID impact for the running programme and for the future.

In regard to the 2020, selection decision included 43 simple and 26 multi programmes. Besides, 9 simple and 6 multi programmes were selected for the additional call. For the multi, all contracts were signed. For simple, Member States have up to end of March, but this deadline might need to be extended upon request of several Member States.

COVID-19 is leading to several impacts leading to suspensions and/or under-execution. CHAFEA and DG AGRI provided Guidance to Member States and beneficiaries in spring 2020 on contractual aspects of terminations, suspensions, and amendments as well as how to deal with change of activities. Out 85 multi programmes up and running, 18 are still suspended. CHAFEA is working case by case with the different consortia to find solutions. Some programmes now lifted their suspensions. Under execution of programme will influence the interim and final payments and the overall budget execution.

Comments

Regarding delays on the signature of the Grant Agreements between beneficiaries and Member States under the call for the AWP 2020 Commission is aware of the late notifications but do not have yet a full review of all Members States

4. AWP 2021 - Mrs Aleksandra Mecilosek (CHAFEA)

This point includes the new structure of award criteria, the relevance of coherence of actions with Green Deal and Farm to Fork: How the sustainability is be understood, demonstrated, and validated by indicators in the context of the Promotion Policy and the debrief of Info day panel discussion.

On March 9th, the Commission published in the Official Journal a regulatory amendment in regard to the Calls for proposals published on 28/1/2021 with an extension of deadline for application to 11 May 2021 and clarify eligibility criteria relating to topics on sustainability. The structure of award criteria are 3 being relevance, quality and impact. There is however two new sub-criteria under relevance to ensure coherence with climate and environmental ambition of CAP, Green Deal and F2F. As other topics, the sustainability topic is linked to the impact in terms of increase of sales and awareness. Programmes should be based on actions towards the sustainability role of agriculture stressing its beneficial influence for climate and environment. It should focus on climate change mitigation and at least some of other elements such as biodiversity, sustainable water management, soil management,... The basic elements of sustainability (economic, social environment) need to be considered in all proposals under all topics.

Comment: Some clarification is requested on some of the latest development in China and if those would impact promotion activities. The Commission is following this matter.

5. AWP 2022 first exchange of views and way forward for the consultation with the CDG - Presentation by Mrs Christina Gerstgrasser (AGRI B1)

The preparation of the 2022 Work Programme started. The Commission will look at the Regulation 1144/2014 and other aspects to secure EU policy coherence. On third countries, one will consider emerging markets and removal of SPS barriers. Input is requested for stakeholders by 15 April and should be sent to the functional box of DGAGRI Promotion Unit. A presentation at CDG in July. A vote is expected in October with Member States. A presentation could then be made at the November/December CDG.

Comments:

Budget for AWP 2022: The Commissioner stressed that the AWP 2021 budget will remain valid at similar level over the next years.

Relevance of considering strategy (F2F and EU beating cancer plan): Participants underlined that the Promotion Policy was not a health policy and thus there was no reason to align with

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Furthermore, participants also underlined that the objective of the revision was to align it with the Farm to Fork objectives, not Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. The Commission underlined that respect for the environment, sustainability, nutrition and health aspects are among the specific features of agricultural production methods that promotion measures aim to highlight according to article 3 of Regulation 1144/2014. The promotion of fruit and vegetables in the context of balanced diets has been a topic in annual work programmes since 2018 and is an important element that the promotion policy could do as part of its coherence with health policy. All agriculture sectors except tobacco are eligible, with alcoholic beverages being subject to specific conditions.

6. Commission own initiative programmes -Presentation by Mr Pawel Bienkowski and Lieve Martens (AGRI B1)

This point includes 2020 debriefing Commission own initiatives and those set for 2021 Commission own Initiatives.

Several activities of the Commission own initiatives had also to be postponed such as HLM to Singapore and Vietnam postponed now to early 2022 tbc. EU pavilions at SIAL China and Alimentaria Mexico are postponed to 2021. EU pavilions in Tokyo, Singapore and India are postponed to 2022. Gulfood pavilion 2021 was cancelled due to the ban on travel from Belgium. In regard to SPS seminars, the one in Vietnam was organised virtually in October 2020, while a virtual seminar in Japan is planned for 19-20 April 2021 with specific focus on sectors on meat, dairy, fruit and veg, olive and wines & spirits. Other seminars (South Africa, China, Nigeria) are postponed to late 2021 or 2022.

A quick review of campaigns in the Middle East, China, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Mexico is provided (masterclasses, bloggers' activities, tastings, webinars, and other social media activities, retail promotion).

In 2021, fair participation of the Commission is maintained for SIAL China in May while Alimentaria in Mexico and CIIE Beijing are planned for second part of the year (TBC). Some activities are planned in the Middle East, Mexico, and other activities in South East Asia and Australia. Market entry handbooks will be released for Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Turkey.

7. JRC study on the cumulative effects of trade agreements on the EU agricultural sector Presentation by Mr Dangiris Nekrasius (AGRI C2)

The study is on the economic impact of the Trade agreement covering global and EU market outlook for 2020 to 2030 with a conservative and ambitious scenarii. COVID-19 is not taken into account nor the Green Deal and F2F. The presentation shows detailed results by sector for EU exports. The study confirms that the EU agriculture trade have benefits to take from the existing and future FTA.

Session on Quality

1. EU trilogue negotiations on the CMO Regulation - Update focused on Geographical Indications -Presentation by Luca Cianfoni (AGRI B3)

The negotiation of the trialogue on the modification of GI is going on. It started in November with the objective of seeking an agreement by March to allow for implementation rules to be discussed as of May. However, there is a delay to reach the March deadline for an agreement. Given many amendments of the Parliament not uptake by the Commission, it has been enlarging the scope of the proposal and negotiation. The trialogue discussion could continue well into May but a positive outcome is expected.

GI is not only about quality but also about the origin and the specific characteristic of the produce to be value to consumers. The matters is therefore not about buying local or within short supply chain, as the recent COVID crisis was suggesting, but selling a product with a concept behind.

2. GI conference “Strengthen the GI” 25-26 November 2020 - Main conclusions –
Presentation by Mrs Nicole Thissen (AGRI B3)

The context, content and outcome of the Conference on 25-26 November 2020 are presented. The Conference was the follow up of an EUIPO conference of 2018 and the call of Commission President to strengthen the system of GI. The conference aimed at being a focal point for stakeholder’s discussion on a wide range of GI issues. It was a joint conference of DG AGRI and EUIPO.

The material of the conference is available online up to November 2021 on the conference website. The conference had 2.500 viewers. The main outcome of the conference and the different panels are as follows:

- Controls and enforcement: domain names and internet- challenge to compete globally.
- Controls and enforcement: PDI/PGI logo use – make it easy to handle and use.
- Sustainability: soft transition with guidelines
- Empowering producers: challenge to encourage GI groups to be organized in structured way.
- Increasing attractiveness and consumers awareness: challenge is going beyond labelling, educate consumers. Difficulties are reported to find new GI
- Empowering producers is needed for efficient GI
- Protection of GI: need more clarity of protection given to GI’s – this is also reflected in the food fraud monitoring.
- REFIT: How to deliver efficiency at minimal cost focusing on quality applications and ensure efficiency.

3. Review of the Geographical Indications policy. Animal welfare, sustainability as means for quality differentiation: How to better align or integrate additional criteria into the EU GI schemes Presentation by Mr Tome Branka and Mrs Ines Seront (AGRI B3)

Presentation on the revision of the GI on some elements including sustainability and animal welfare. The revision is part of a context with other initiatives, namely the F2F and the IP action plan. The evaluation process of the reform is going on with an open public consultation taking place up to 9 of April. Draft legislative proposal could be released in the Autumn for adopting regulation by end of 2021 . From the roadmap consultation, 51 feedbacks were received from stakeholders.

Main focus of comments was on sustainability and its impact for GI’s. For ways forward and from the evaluation , the following are issues to be looked at

- fraud and counterfeit labelling of fake GI is a concern.
- the low consumer recognition/understanding of GI schemes and GI logos,
- due to their nature (regional, traditional practices, use of specific varieties and species, small production) GIs are already often sustainable

- sustainability concerns are not always reflected in GI schemes and how and if it should be taken into account to modify the content or at least better communicate the already existing sustainability elements in the GI's.
- Complexity of administration
- Low number of TSG's

To strengthen the GI the impact assessment provides recommendations to

- Improve enforcement.
- Reduce internet fraud.
- Improve sustainability aspects.
- Better inform consumers.
- Strengthen GI groups
- Speed up registration.
- Facilitate administration.

In regard to sustainability and GI there are some challenges to introduce sustainability concept as it is not easy of change production /growing practice. One should encourage producer groups to highlight existing higher sustainability aspects and to define even higher standards.

Comments: Producers welcome initiatives that help enhancing quality and specification, but without moving into more fragmentation leading to difficulties for consumers to understand the assets on matters such as sustainability and animal welfare. Regarding sustainability, Commission presented some tools to make sustainability aspects more visible. Some GI already include sustainability criteria or animal welfare steps. Some are clearly displaying their sustainability aspects.

- It is important not to water down the value of GI within this new F2F debate towards more sustainability for all food. One should take a practical stands to keep the efficient functioning of GI with new strategies and priorities and how to adjust/cope with a “global” environment which also include third countries GI (Colombia, China,..)
- If a GI is including new sustainability criteria, could there be a transition period to allow growers to adapt to modified products specification. The Commission confirmed this is possible.

4. **BREXIT – development regarding Geographical Indications** – Presentation by Mrs Daniela Planchensteiner (AGRI A1)

The Commission reminded that under the terms of the withdrawal agreement the UK has committed to continue to protect in the UK the entire stock of GIs, traditional terms for wine and traditional specialities guaranteed that are registered under EU legislation at 31 December 2020. Protection has to be granted at least at the same level as under EU law, with no additional registration fee nor re-examination. The new UK GIs legislation has largely replicated the EU legislation, without any major changes. The UK has also listed all the EU GIs in its new GIs register. No issues were reported at the institutional level up to now. The commitment of the UK to align with EU legislation is referred to the EU legislation as it stands at the end of the transition period, with no obligation of “dynamic alignment” in case of improvements in the EU legislation.

5. **Eurobarometer "Making our food fit for the future – Citizens' expectations"** -Presentation by Mrs Anne Laure Gassin (Sante D1)

This Eurobarometer was contracted by the Commission to understand how citizens define sustainable food and assess their attitudes and expectations at the time that the EU introduces a new strategy (F2F) to establish sustainable food systems. Taste, food safety and cost are the most important drivers of consumers' food purchases. Other aspects such as origin and nutrient content are cited to a lesser extent. For consumers, sustainable food means nutritious and healthy products, with limited use of PPP and affordable food. For Europeans, the most important aspect of a sustainable diet is that is healthy, but food supporting local economy and produced in a way that minimises waste are cited by at least four in ten. Concerns regarding the environmental and/or climate impacts of food are more prevalent amongst younger age groups. Most Europeans consider that they themselves eat a healthy and sustainable diet. Affordability, availability of sustainable food where usually shopping and clear information on food labelling regarding sustainability impacts could help citizens adopt such diets. Producers and food manufacturers are seen as playing an important role in this process.

Comments: sustainability for consumers might be different for animal or plant-based products. The report did not go into such a details or specifications based on products.

Next meeting: The next meeting planned in 2021 are set for 1st July and 1st December 2021

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

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MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
Association des régions européennes des produits d'origine (AREPO)	2
Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs (BEUC)	1
European Council of Young farmers (CEJA)	4
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	4
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	4
European farmers (COPA)	4
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	1
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	1
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	1
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	1
European Federation of Origin Wines (EFOW)	1
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO)	2
European Milk Board (EMB)	1
European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)	1
European Rural Poultry Association (ERPA)	1
EuroCommerce	1
Euro Coop - European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (Eurocoop)	----
Euromontana (Euromontana)	1
Farmhouse and Artisan Cheese and dairy producers' European network (FACE Network)	1
Friends of the Earth Europe (FOEE)	1
FoodDrinkEurope (FooddrinkEurope)	5

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM)	2
Organisation pour un réseau international d'indications géographiques (Origin)	1
Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunion / Joint Secretariat of Agricultural Trade Associations (SACAR)	3
Slowfood (Slowfood)	1
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	----