

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

1 October 2020

Chair: Celia NYSSSENS (EEB)

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except Beelife, CAN Europe, CEPM, EuropaBio, EuroCommerce, EuroCoop, ECPA and EOCC.

1. Approval of the agenda

Agenda was approved.

2. Nature of the meeting

The meeting was non-public and was organised online.

3. List of points discussed

- PRESENTATION OF THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

DG SANTE and DG AGRI representatives presented the Commission's Communication on the Farm to Fork Strategy. The point was discussed jointly with Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (next point).

- PRESENTATION OF THE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

DG ENV representative presented the Commission's Communication on the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

COPA stressed that farmers are part of the solution and are constantly improving sustainability of their practices while producing safe and high-quality food and renewable raw materials. If farmers are asked to do more in terms of environmental impact they need to be properly supported and we need to take into account bigger picture in terms of viability of rural areas, employment, economic growth etc. Therefore, there is a need for the proper impact assessment for both Strategies.

BIRDLIFE EUROPE expressed concerns that the current and future CAP is/will not be able to deliver on the goals of the Strategies. BIRDLIFE EUROPE asked what is the Commission power to ensure that high ambition is maintained during the dialogues on the future CAP and whether the Commission is considering withdrawal of the CAP proposal?

DG AGRI replied that the Commission is not planning to withdraw the proposal and that constructive dialog is needed to ensure that the ambition of the legislative proposal is maintained.

CEJA asked whether the Commission will prepare impact assessment for the Strategies and whether the targets will be adapted accordingly. CEJA asked what was the basis for the quantitative targets on e.g. fertilisers and antimicrobials. It was stressed that provisions on the alternatives are missing from the Strategies.

DG ENV replied that there was a lot of discussion on the impact of the targets proposed. Targets are political, like the climate ones, but based on available scientific evidence and data. Any future legislative tool will however be subject of impact assessment.

EURAF asked (via chat) whether the Member States will be obliged to publish their draft CAP SWOT analysis and draft Strategic Plans and what is the timetable in this respect. The clarification on the use of Annex XII indicators was also requested.

DG AGRI replied (via chat) that there is no legal obligation to publish draft CAP SWOT analysis, but the good practice is to involve stakeholders in different stages of the process, including the SWOT. Member States are also supposed to involve stakeholders in the preparatory phase of the CAP Strategic Plans and during the discussion at the Monitoring Committee of each Member State. The list of Annex XII is a short "subset" of indicators that, once aggregated at EU level by the Commission, will be part of the "corporate" indicators of the whole EU budget. While Annex I commits the Member States, Annex XII commits the Commission in the budgetary procedures.

FOODDRINK EUROPE asked (via chat) clarification about the foreseen budget of €10 billion in Horizon Europe that will be dedicated to programme on agriculture, food, bio-economy etc. and whether the EUCO Conclusions from July confirmed this figure. They would welcome the fact that the above mentioned budget has been kept as initially proposed by the Commission.

DG AGRI replied (via chat) that the figures agreed by the European Council on Horizon Europe are general for the whole programme and do not go to the details of the different specific programmes within Horizon. Since there is a reduction in the overall Horizon budget as compared with the initial proposal, it is not known how this decrease translates to different programmes.

EEB stressed (via chat) that we need to take care that the CAP is protected from environmental dumping (by carbon tax for the impacts coming outside of the EU) and ensure that subsidiarity does not open the door to this (by different economic supports and application of pesticide measures, in particular).

PAN EUROPE thanked (via chat) for the clarification on the issue of impact assessments and asked Commission to ensure that the timelines do not prevent (through delays and procrastinations) much needed action.

IFOAM stated (via chat) that the organic food and farming sector fully supports the F2F and Biodiversity objectives and believes that it is time for action without any delay. They asked what the Commission will be able to do from a legal point of view in case of disagreement with Member States on the level of ambition and content of their national CAP Strategic Plans.

BIRDLIFE EUROPE stressed (via chat) that droughts, wildfires, floods and covid are all a good impact assessment of the cost of inaction. Scientific studies show that these costs far-outweigh those of action. Therefore, future impact assessments on legislative aspects should not be used instrumentally to delay urgent action to address the climate and biodiversity emergency. The better regulation guidelines should allow for action where there is an urgent public interest.

CEJA asked (via chat) about the incoherence between the two strategies and the past trade agreements made with third countries. Another question on the possibilities of Gene Editing, as an alternative for reaching the targets, was also raised.

COPA member MTK Finland stated (via chat) that their organisation supports the main goal of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 which aims at halting the loss of biodiversity. However, they expressed concern about the narrowness of aspects related to agriculture, forestry and bioeconomy in the Strategy and in the wider context of the EU biodiversity policy. There is no sustainability without the balance of all three pillars – environmental, social and economic. Agriculture and forestry play an important role in a transition towards sustainable societies. In addition to ambition, realism and a balanced overall picture are needed. The content of the Biodiversity Strategy is mostly restrictive and based on legally binding approaches, which poses a significant risk to the opportunities of responsible and sustainable agriculture and forestry to contribute to the achievements of the SDGs and the goals of the EU Green Deal (e.g. climate change mitigation). The importance of the sustainable use of natural resources as a solution to many societal challenges has not been recognized in the Strategy.

- HOW TO DELIVER THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY TARGET ON NUTRIENTS AND FERTILISERS

Professor Mark Sutton, from the UK Centre for ecology & hydrology gave a presentation on the topic above.

EURAF asked (via chat) whether the farm nutrient models (e.g. FAST) are good enough to reward farmers for saving nitrogen, mentioning that you can pay farmer for the tonne of sequestered carbon but in the same time asking whether the same is possible for the kg of nitrogen reduced.

Professor Mark Sutton replied (via chat) that it is great to see FAST being developed, but noted that the model still needs to be fully evaluated.

EFNCP stated (via chat) that more than 25% of all EU farmland is extensive low input High Nature Value (HNV) Farmland. These areas need targeted advice on nutrient management and advice should therefore be adapted to these particular systems. It was asked if the presenter could suggest work done on the nutrient balances in the extensive systems.

Professor Mark Sutton replied that when it comes to extensive systems more can be done in the scope of timing and levels of grazing.

DG AGRI replied (via chat) that they are not aware of any specific targeted advisory services on nutrient balance in HNV farming. However, current farm advisory service of

CAP should be able to give such advice. In the future CAP, the Commission proposed extending such services in scope via AKIS and the use of Farm sustainability Tool for Nutrients. Cooperation and knowledge sharing is already available and possible with EIP-AGRI. Several practices for mitigation were also mentioned e.g. conserving nutrients on a farm - manure storage and management (coverage), appropriate storage facility for slurry, use of anaerobic digestion (biogas and digestate for fertilisation), investment in animal housing (quick evacuation and collection of slurry from building) etc. It was also mentioned that the Commission is planning to prepare an Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan by 2022 (which could include e.g. sustainable manure management, promote circularity of recycling on nutrients, more targeted fertiliser management etc.).

BIRDLIFE EUROPE asked what could be possible on-farm measures and are there better solutions compared to the precision agriculture.

Professor Mark Sutton replied that different farmers might implement different measures, e.g. bigger farms might opt for precision agriculture. Other options could be measures regarding the animal housing and fine-tuning the amount of nutrient losses.

- PRESENTATIONS OF EVALUATION STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE CAP ON HABITATS, LANDSCAPES, BIODIVERSITY

Mr David Mottershead from the IEEP/IEEG Alliance Environnement gave a presentation on the topic above. The point was discussed jointly with the following point.

- PRESENTATIONS OF EVALUATION STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE CAP ON WATER

Ms Alice Devot from Oréade-Brèche/IEEG Alliance Environnement gave a presentation on the topic above.

COPA stated that it is important to discuss how we can actually use these studies.

IFOAM mentioned the example where water authorities are offering top-up payments for farmers to switch to organic and asked whether these kind of schemes were assessed as part of the evaluation studies and what are the possible options for the future.

COPA asked if in the future farmers could be involved and incentivised in data collection.

Mr David Mottershead replied that it would be good if schemes would be developed to pay farmers for the data collection.

Ms Alice Devot replied that schemes provided by water companies were included in the evaluation. It was stated that farmers are looking for long-term options and that the new data is always helpful.

EURAF asked what was the smallest NUTS unit that was assessed in the evaluation and whether it is possible to make regionalization of the CAP effects.

PAN Europe stated (via chat) that again we see that unless specific and binding targets and objectives are set and enforcement, achievements in practice are not great. The

Commission was asked how to ensure that targets are mandatory and that enforcement practices are also mandatory.

DG AGRI replied that the use of mandatory practices depends on the context.

WWF asked (via chat) what is the presenter's impression about the Biodiversity Strategy and its section on agriculture, after the detailed assessment of CAP impacts on biodiversity and if it reflects well the major challenges and if anything important is missing.

Mr David Mottershead replied (via chat) that in his personal view, as IEEP is involved in the impact assessment, there is a good agenda with setting the Strategy but a lot will depend on the targets for e.g. restoration.

PAN Europe asked (via chat) if social scientists have given input on setting and implementation of practices that will achieve compliance and if not, can they be more engaged.

Ms Alice Devot replied (via chat) that social scientists could help us understand the drivers behind implementation choices made by farmers and to set 'realistic' targets probably by identifying the levers to ensure that expected changes are implemented.

- ALTERNATIVES TO PESTICIDES – HOW TO ACCELERATE THE UPTAKE OF BIOPROTECTION

Ms Jennifer Lewis, from the International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association (IBMA) gave a presentation on the topic above.

Ifoam emphasised that availability of the tools (for natural substances) is needed and that more has to be done in regulatory terms when it comes to their approval. Since their providers are SMEs there are many challenges in this regard.

PAN Europe stressed the importance of advisors and how they are trained. Integrated Pest Management training is very important to ensure robustness in its application.

FEFANA mentioned (via chat) that natural substances can pose the same risk and hazard as synthetic ones and that their effects have to be considered scientifically on a case by case basis.

Ms Jennifer Lewis replied that for SME providers there needs to be clarity on the market returns and that therefore farmers need to be incentivised to use biocontrol measures. It was agreed that approval process of natural substances has to be speed up. When it comes to training, an option could be to explore increased possibility of online trainings focusing on specific crops or Member States.

- AOB

CEJA mentioned that interpretation to Spanish language should be added for future meetings and that presentations should be made available for participants few days in advance of the meeting.

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The CDG didn't agree on any conclusions/recommendations/opinions.

5. Next steps

The CDG didn't agree on any next steps.

6. Next meeting

Next meeting was scheduled for 4th November 2020.

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

**Civil Dialogue Group ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
01/10/2020**

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
AnimalhealthEurope	1
Bee Life-European Beekeeping Coordination (Bee Life)	--
Climate Action Network Europe (CAN Europe)	--
Confédération Européenne de la Production de Maïs (C.E.P.M)	--
EU Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures (FEFANA)	1
EuropaBio	--
EuroCommerce	--
Eurogroup for Animals	1
European agri-cooperatives (COGECA)	3
European Agricultural Machinery (CEMA)	1
European Agroforestry Federation (EURAF)	1
European Biodiesel Board (EBB)	1
European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (EUROCOOP)	--
European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC)	1
European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)	2
European Crop Protection Association (ECPA)	--
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)	2
European farmers (COPA)	5
European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT)	2
European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism (EFNCP)	1
European Landowners' Organization asbl (ELO asbl)	3
European Liaison Committee for Agriculture and agri-food trade (CELCAA)	2

European Organic Certifiers Council (EOCC)	--
Fertilizers Europe	2
FoodDrinkEurope	2
International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Regional Group (IFOAM EU Group)	2
Pesticide Action Network Europe (PAN Europe)	3
Secrétariat des Associations du Commerce Agricole Réunies (SACAR)	1
Slow Food	1
Stichting BirdLife Europe (BirdLife Europe)	2
WWF European Policy Programme (WWF EPO)	2
Invited speakers - Alliance Environnement GEIE	2
Invited speaker - International Biocontrol Manufacturers Association	1
Invited speaker - UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology	1
Total: 45	