

FINAL MINUTES

Meeting of the Civil Dialogue Group “Quality & Promotion”

Date: 5 November 2020 (via Webex)

Chair: Mr BENVENUTI (COGECA) until the elections;
Mrs RUBBI (SACAR) from the elections on.

Organisations present: All Organisations were present, except EFFAT AND WWF.

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 webstreamed.

Election of the president: The procedure of vote is adapted to the online system, open vote system. The candidates are as follows and present themselves to the CDG members in attendance:

- i. Ms Simona Rubbi as President on behalf of SACAR, for a first mandate as chair
- ii. Ms Francesca Bignami representing FoodDrink Europe, for a first mandate as vice-chair
- iii. Ms Claire Martin representing COPA COGECA for a first mandate as vice-chair

The election provided the following outcome:

- Ms Simona Rubbi is elected as chair
- Ms Francesca Bignami is elected as vice-chair
- Ms Claire Martin is elected as vice chair

Policy points discussed during the CDG Quality Policy and Promotion

- Quality
 - Strengthening Geographical Indications:
 - **Information on the process and discussion relating the GI's reform by AGRI B3** (Presentation by Ms Valerie Dufour). The GI's reform is foreseen in the Farm to Fork Strategy to strengthen the system of GI's, include specific sustainability criteria where possible and reinforce the position of farmers in the supply chain. There is also in preparation an Intellectual Property Action Plan, to have GI's more effective and avoid anti-counterfeiting. The reform will be undertaken through different steps including an external evaluation of the current policy (launched in December

2019), and a road map with Inception Impact Assessment (IIA) launched in October 2020. A GI's conference will take place on 25-26 November 2020 to raise awareness of the current debate. Later in 2020, a 12-weeks' public consultation will be launched, as part of an Impact Assessment in 2021 leading to some policy initiatives.

In the reform, there are some challenges to overcome regarding enforcement, legal uncertainty, sustainability, the low level of consumers' recognition of EU schemes and logos, the empowerment of farmers in the supply chain and the very low take of Traditional Speciality Guaranteed scheme (TSG). The reform will have different objectives such as improving GI's protection, increasing efficiency of the scheme, and encourage producers to highlight environmental and social aspects. There is a first stakeholders' consultation on the reform with deadline of 25 November (road map/IIA)

Experts questioned the Commission about how the reform could reinforce the sustainability, the nutritional quality and other environmental aspects of GI's towards consumers. COM highlighted the importance of stakeholders' input in this process. Besides, experts also seek clarification about how GI's reform could be influenced under the CAP 2020 reform package as well as under the F2F strategy. On this point, the Commission clarified that the difference between the two processes is that CAP is driven by objectives of simplification and harmonization, while the upcoming evaluation will have a more in-depth review of the policy with close consultation with stakeholders.

- **Food fraud and GIs – How to proceed further?** (Presentation by Francis Fay, Head of Unit Agri B3). This presentation focuses on regulatory enforcement and different measures to prevent food fraud, and in particular have proper enforcement of EU law in regard to GI and official control rules as well as IP protection. There is also always the capacity for private sector to protect their IP rights in court against IP misused and counterfeited.

In the process, several topics are relevant, including the diversity of rules, the pressure on human resources, the certification procedures, the costs of controls on production.... There is also issues in regard to Internet DNS (Domain Name System) such as e.g. a "Champagne" domain name. There are finally also other aspects regarding sales on Online platform, selling e.g. counterfeited products. There are several scenarii for enhancing effectiveness of GI's protection by recalibrating Member States checks, better protecting GI's on the internet to decrease the counterfeiting of products. It will also aim at increasing transparency of GI's through a "GI view" data base.

JRC-Fraud detection: Franz Ulberth (JRC – Unit on Fraud Detection and Prevention Unit) made a presentation on food fraud and GI's. JRC is working on an early warning system in the supply chain to combat food fraud. This is one of the points raised in the Green Deal Communication. The main characteristics of food fraud include several aspects such as violation of EU rules, with an intention, with an economic gain perspective or with the view of misinforming consumers.

The 2019 Annual report on Food Fraud indicates that mislabeling is the main source of fraud (47%), then the absence of documents/falsification of certificate (15%), unapproved treatment (16%) ,... To secure food integrity, several aspects need to be taken into account including preventive controls, early warning system, authentication technology, supply chain transparency, ingredients specification, vulnerability assessment.

In regard to an early warning system, several steps are needed from risks knowledge, to monitoring and warning services as well as dissemination and communication. The European monthly report of Food Fraud is contributing to this objective of early warning system. Several Member States has not yet implemented such a system.

From stakeholders, it is reminded that one of the main problem is the visibility of the GIs logo and the awareness at consumers level. This issue need to be and will be addressed in the reform to improve how the logo is used and understood by consumers. There is also concerns on the control methodology in the different Member States leading to discrepancies and questions if the reform is planning to take steps to reinforce the harmonization of the controls. The Commission is not yet looking at concrete steps but rather try to understand the control system to see if recalibration of controls needs to be undertaken.

- **EU conference “Strengthening geographical indications” on 25 and 26 November.** (Presentation by Mr Ptak from AGRI B3). The main objectives of the digital conference on GI's are presented. This is part of the reform of GI's and the consultation of stakeholders. This conference is co-organized by DG AGRI and EUIPO (IP rights organization). It will be a two-day conference on-line. It will focus on the topic of enforcement and will launch the reform consultation process. Meeting will be open by Commissioner Wojciechowski. The conference will look at enforcement, the Intellectual Property Protection of GI, the sustainability and increase intake of GI's, the global spread of GIs and the non-agricultural GIs.
- **Follow-up: EU best practice Guidelines for voluntary certification schemes for agricultural products [2010/C 341/04]**

- **Presentation by Mr Christian Jochum (COPA COGECA):** The reasons of setting the guidelines for voluntary schemes are reminded as well as the current state of play. Presentation also covered the evolution of this guidelines in regard to evolving need related to F2F and sustainability and how to best combine existing certification schemes with these new requirements and what balance between mandatory framework and space for private/voluntary/sector criteria
 - **Presentation by Sabrina Melis (QS):** Presentation of the experience of QS on the crossed- stage quality scheme for the supply chain based on the EU guidelines. QS was set up after the BSE meat crisis. It is an independent scheme covering also fruit and vegetables. A label of the QS scheme can be visible for consumers buying products in the major German retailers. The scheme is transparent with a publication of the Cie participating to the scheme. The QS scheme have quality assurance with requirements at the different levels of the chain. The system is checked at different levels including Internal Control (self-assessment with continuous sampling), external controls (independent audits and neutral analysis), meta control (laboratory performance assessment,..) and non-compliance procedure. QS works with a decision making process operating with unanimous decisions. QS have different recognition agreements for avoiding double audits, for example the agreement of cooperation between QS and GlobalGAP. The presentation demonstrated how QS scheme operates with the recommendations of the EU guidelines on matters such as the opening to all participants, the development of requirements by technical committees, the specifications to be freely available, and information for consumers.
- **Short report on CMO proposal in the framework of CAP 2021-2027 in the current scenery and its possible delay to 2023:** effects on EU Quality Policy)

The European Parliament and Council have adopted their positions on the CAP reform and started the trilogue. The objective is to get agreement by March and work on Implementing and Delegated acts as of May. The Commission is assessing the position of EP and Council to start the Trilogue negotiation.

- **GIs and Brexit:** Presentation by Daniela Panchensteiner (AGRI A1). There is not yet a breakthrough in the negotiation. The disagreement continues on fishery, governance and competitive level playing field, making difficult to progress on other issues of the partnership. It can not be an economic partnership without such a fair playing field on matters relating to quality, environment.... The discussion continues for the moment with tight agenda and Commission still hopes to conclude at the latest mid-November.

- **AOB of the quality section of the CDG:** no item is raised under this point.

- Promotion matters

- **2020 calls for proposals on promotion and information. Outcome for simple and multi programmes and presentation of the Commission own initiatives 2020**

Presentation by Varvara Bektasiadou (AGRI B1) on the selection of the simple programmes concerning promotion of agricultural products for 2020 for the call for the AWP 2020 and for the extra COVID call.

- For simple programme under AWP 2020. 129 proposals were submitted with a total of grants requested for 225 Mio €. 54 proposals referred to the internal market and 75 for the third countries. 43 proposals were accepted (33%). With the accepted proposal, 98,9 % of the budget was used. The Implementing decision still needs to be finalized and published and beneficiaries confirmed by the Member States.
- In regard to additional call of proposal to restore market confidence, 33 proposals were received for 16 mio € while budget available is 5 Mio€. Basket of products was the large proposal followed by cheese (7) and fruit (6), cut flowers (2) and vegetables (2). Most of the proposals focused on the internal market (24 out of 33). As the application widely exceed the budget, only 9 proposals were accepted for 4,3 Mio € representing 87 % of the budget; 4 proposals covered the basket of products , 3 for fruit and 1 for cheese and 1 for vegetables. 7 proposals target the internal market and 2 target third countries.

Presentation by Aleksandra Mecilosek (CHAFFEA) on the selection of the multi programmes concerning promotion of agricultural products for 2020 for the call for the AWP 2020 and for the extra COVID call.

- In regard to multi programme under the AWP 2020, 49 proposals were submitted for 153 mio € out of 86, 4 mio € available. 39 proposals targeted the internal market and 10 the third countries. For third countries only 65% of the budget was requested and in total 26 proposals were accepted. The lack of applications for third countries, led to the possibility of a reallocation done to F&V which received a total grant of 16 Mio € while the initial budget available for that topic is 8 Mio €. Consequently, for the accepted projects, 18 proposals go on internal market and 8 on third countries.

- In regard to the additional multi call to restore market conditions of products affected by market disturbances, 8 proposals were submitted and 6 accepted for 5,8 Mio €
- General evaluation: the number of proposals were higher this year (+40% for multi and + 20% for simple). Quality of proposals and budget is rising leading to higher competition and many new organizations are being involved in applications.
- Following a question from the Group on the content of the programmes promoting a “basket of products”, a table including information was provided by CHAFEA and shared with the participants.

Commission own initiative programme; presentation by Pawel Bienkowski and Lieve Martens (AGRI B1) :

- Report of the EU seminar on quality in Vietnam. Provided the sanitary situations permits this, a high level mission of the Commissioner could be planned for 2021 as a follow up.
 - The Commission also provided an overview of the campaign in China “Colours by Europe”. The campaign was awarded as “2020 Platinum PR” award and the “Digital awards ICCO”. The “Perfect Match” campaign in Japan is also highlighted by the Commission .
 - New campaigns are launched in Vietnam and Singapore. New campaign targeting South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia will be launched in early 2021 with a budget of 3 Mio €
 - Report is also provided on the “More than food campaign” in Middle East with different activities on Instagram, B2B, ... Presence at the Food festival in Saudi Arabia is now postponed due to boycott of French products.
 - In regard to the Americas, information is provided regarding the Mexico campaign (Bocados de Europa) with website, Instagram and FB activities and VIP dinners with media influencers. Also an evaluation of Canada campaign (2,1 Mio €) with B2B and B2C is provided with a review of the achievements.
 - Market entry handbooks: recently published are on Malaysia and South Africa and a new report coming up for USA.
 - In regard to Trade fair, no participation are currently planned except Gulf Food which is still planned for February.
- **State of play of the running programs and flexibility due to the Covid – 19 :** Presentation by Bruno de Oliveira AGRI B1

The Covid had some important impacts for the management of programme relevant for stakeholders and Members states on the activities of the programme. The Commission provided the 3 options for the Grant Agreement to deal with the COVID outbreak:

- Amendment
- Suspension
- Termination

In regard of multi programme, half of the programme were suspended. CHAFFEA is exploring with beneficiaries how activities can be adapted. Amendments and timeline adjustments are needed to be assessed to stay within the terms of the grants. There is a FAQ section providing responses to questions. At this moment, there is not yet any request of termination of projects by the beneficiaries.

○ **Annual Work Programme 2021: general overview and changes due the COVID-19 and Brexit (Presentation by Christina Gerstgrasser AGRI B1).**

The Commission is still under inter-services consultation and can therefore not yet present the ideas for the AWP 2021. Once the inter-services is concluded, the Commission will provide the proposal to Member States, who will have a two weeks consultation period. The Commission will then move to written procedure for acceptance by Member States. It is too early to confirm if the draft of July is kept as such or is significantly modified. In regard to Brexit, the UK will be included as third countries and application will have to be done as such. In the context of the MMF discussion it was agreed that budget will be decreased for market measures by 3,9%, so it could be expected that the promotion budget will be decrease accordingly.

○ **State of play of the evaluation and revision of the Promotion Policy (Bruno de Oliveira AGRI B1):**

A public consultation was opened which attracted feedback (100+ responses) with different views between internal market/third countries, different opinions on relevance of sustainability and EU quality schemes, as well as regarding the aspects of shared management and differences between multi and simple programmes. The external evaluation support study was recently published on Europa website. The Commission report to the European Parliament and Council on the application of the promotion policy regulation is expected to be provided by the end of the year, followed by a review of the regulation to be carried out in 2021. Legislative proposals are not expected to be released before the end of 2021.

Upon question of stakeholders on the interest of the Commissioner for promotion policy, Commission services responded that the Commissioner attended the Info day and was prepared to engage in several activities in 2020 for Commission own initiatives which had to be cancelled due to COVID , but remain fully committed for 2021.

Questions was also linked to the coherence of promotion policy with health aspects as appearing from the study. Should promotion be more linked to principle of sustainable and healthy diet?

- **Farm to Fork Strategy and the Promotion Policy:** (Christina Gerstgrasser AGRI B1). The Commission provided an overview of the work programme to progress on the F2F strategy. The promotion policy will need to take into account the recommendation of F2F of sustainable production and consumption and be coherent. F2F is a strategy, a roadmap which should include revision of policy. The Council conclusions is welcoming that the Commission is seeking to enhance the contribution of the EU promotion to sustainable production and consumption, including organic products and EU quality scheme.
- **Role of CHAFEA and the new management of the programs as of 2021:** (Christina Gerstgrasser AGRI B1). No information can yet be provided in this respect.
- **AOB for promotion topics:**
 - An info day is planned on two days in January with a programme adapted on a two days format.
 - Request of COPA COGECA to have translation services for next year meetings.
- **Next meeting :** No date has been scheduled for the next meeting, but three meetings will be planned in 2021 : March , July and November
- **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 “Quality & Promotion”

Date: 5 November 2020

MEMBER ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF PERSONS
AREPO	2
BEUC	1
COGECA (INCLUDING PAST CHAIR AND NOTE TAKER)	5
CEJA	4
CELCAA	3
COPA	3
EFNCP	1
EFOW	1
ELO	2
ERPA	1
EUROCOMMERCE	1
EUROMONTANA	1
EXTERNAL EXPERTS	2
EEB	1
FACE NETWORK	1
FOODDRINKEUROPE	5
FOEE	1
IFOAM	2
ORIGIN	1
SACAR (INCLUDING NEW CHAIR AND NOTE TAKER)	4
SLOWFOOD	1