



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate R. Management of resources
R.4. Inter-institutional relations

Brussels, 16 December 2016

Minutes - Stock taking on Civil Dialogue Groups with CEOs/their representatives
(list of participants in annex)

14 December 2017 10:30 AM

Participants from DG AGRI: Ms. SAUZE-VANDEVYVER Nathalie, Mr. HAEUSLER Georg, [REDACTED]

1. Reorganisation of DG AGRI as from 1st January 2017 and draft calendar for 2017

Director Georg HAUSLER (GH) recalled the staff cuts that were decided for the European Commission since 2012 and for DG AGRI in particular. These cuts will put an additional constraint on the services and therefore an improved use of the scarce resources is crucial.

GH explained the reorganisation of DG AGRI and the new organisation chart that will be in force as from 1st January 2017 and which was distributed to participants. The preparation of CDGs will pass under the responsibility of directorate I of DG AGRI, Unit I4-Adoption procedures, committees, expert groups and civil dialogue groups. Mr HAUSLER presented the new team that will be in charge of the CDGs as from 1st of January 2017.

GH informed that in the context of the reorganisation of DG AGRI and based on the two years' experience since the reformed CDGs, the Commission will continue to search for further improvements in the functioning of the CDGs. Hence the need to further improve the efficiency of the meetings, on rationalising the number of the meetings and improve rooms' management and planning. Furthermore, the Commission is currently pilot testing a new software, AGORA, that will be used for the management of experts' reimbursement. Against this background it will be necessary to stick to a stricter timeline of meetings; therefore the dates of the meetings will be set for a period and these dates can only be changed in duly justified cases.

An exchange of views followed with the stakeholders. The main subjects raised were:

- The necessity to **further improve the planning** of meetings in order to allow participants to anticipate and better prepare the meetings.
- The Commission representatives as well as the stakeholders will continue efforts in order to **make documents related to the meetings available on CIRCA** at least 3 working days in advance.
- There was a division among stakeholders on the **necessity of maintaining or not highly sectorial CDGs (pigmeat, sheepmeat, beef and horticultural sub groups/forecasts)**. The representative of the Commission concluded that further discussions are necessary on this subject.
- **Role of chairmanship** of the CDGs. Several organisation representatives stressed the necessity of having a Code of Conduct for Chairs and Vice-chairs of CDGs in order to avoid abuse of power during meetings. GH reminded that the chairs of CDGs are supposed to be neutral in the exercise of their functions. Therefore the Chair and Vice-chairs do not represent the interest of the organisation to which they belong. DG AGRI will draft a Code of Conduct that will be binding for the chairpersons (and vice chairs).

The stakeholders also underlined the fact that the Chairs should propose agenda items considering the general interest of the group. They should also ensure that all items are discussed.

- The time for **drafting and approval of minutes** of CDGs is, in certain cases, very long. Further efforts will be made by stakeholders and Commission services in order to reduce it.
- **Common resolutions** can be adopted by the members of a group by unanimity. The Commission encourages discussions among the members of the CDGs and supports the adoption of common resolutions according to the rules in force.
- Stakeholders express the need to enhance the **content of meetings** and to improve the dialogue among members and with the Commission. The meetings should be more policy driven and not only informative.
- **Agenda has too many items**. Therefore, it should concentrate on key issues.
- **Participation of Commission representatives in the CDGs**. Some stakeholders requested the systematic presence of head of unit/directors in the meetings as well as the presence of colleagues from other DGs is necessary and highly appreciated.

GH explained that, given the constraints, DG AGRI cannot commit to ensure the presence of heads of unit in every CDG. As regards the presence of colleagues of other DGs, this subject should be addressed at a higher level in the Commission in order to encourage the “breaking down silos” approach.

- **Technical improvement of CIRCA**. DG AGRI staff will check if there is a possibility to reduce the number of identical emails ("spamming") sent to the members of CDGs every day.
- Small organisations have sometimes just one member in a CDG. If that member becomes chair of the group, it means that the organisation loses its voice in the

CDG as the chair should be neutral. A reflection should be made on how to avoid such cases.

- GH pointed out that the CDGs have a crucial role for the Commission as they are feeding the policy making process.

2. CAP consultation post 2020

_____ gave a presentation on the Consultation on the future of the CAP that is currently prepared by DG AGRI (please see attached PPP). The consultation will be probably launched in February 2017 for a period of 12 weeks. The results of the consultation will be presented during the summer 2017 and will feed into the Communication on the modernisation and simplification of the CAP.

The consultation will be officially presented during the CDG on the CAP (16 December 2016).

A long exchange of views followed. The stakeholders expressed their support for maintaining a strong CAP and reinforcing the rural policy.

The representatives of the Commission ensured that the reflection on the future of the CAP will be made via an open dialogue with the stakeholders and that all aspects of agriculture will be analysed. Stakeholders are also invited to contribute and bring support to the Commission on the simplification process.

3. Tackling international issues

_____ recalled the strong demand from the stakeholders to discuss international issues in sectorial CDGs. As previously discussed, given the existence of a dedicated CDG on International Aspects of Agriculture (IAA), international issues will be discussed in sectorial CDGs only in the case of an important breakthrough on a specific aspect. General international issues should be discussed during the IAA CDG.

4. Conclusions

Ms Nathalie Ms. SAUZE-VANDEVYVER concluded on the following:

- DG AGRI will consider further possible improvements of the functioning of CDGs.
- A Code of Conduct for Chairs and Vice-chairs of CDGs will be drafted and presented to the members for approval.
- Further improvements should be done together with the members of the CDGs to ensure the availability of relevant information and documents before the meetings.