



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate C Strategy, simplification and policy analysis
The Director

Brussels, 04/05/2021
AGRI.DDG1.C1/

MINUTES

Meeting of the meeting of the Expert Group for Horizontal Questions concerning the CAP

Subgroup Simplification

11 February 2021

Chair: (AGRI.C1)

Delegations present: All Member States were present, as well as colleagues from DG AGRI, DG ENV, ESTAT, JRC and CLIMA.

- 1. Approval of the agenda and of the minutes of previous meeting**
- 2. Nature of the meeting**

Following the first expert group meeting organised on 5 February 2021, AGRI C1 organised this second online expert group meeting to clarify how the Green Deal targets of the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies fit into the (preparation of the) CAP strategic plan. The meeting focussed on targets related to organic area, nutrient loss, landscape features and broadband.

- 3. List of points discussed**

Welcome and summary of the meeting of 5 February.

recalled that the organisation of this expert group aimed to explain the link between the CAP recommendations, the Green Deal targets and the CAP strategic plans as part of the structured dialogue between the Commission and the Member States for the preparation of these plans. He reiterated the main elements of the 5 February expert group, with regard to the so-called 'national values' of the Green Deal targets.

*A number of Member States raised general critical **questions** in relation to the Commission invitation to Member States to set national values for the green deal targets. The Netherlands asked what would happen if a Member State refused to put a national target in their CAP strategic plan, Hungary asked what would happen if the Commission considers that the aggregated national values are not sufficient to meet the EU target. France and Belgium wondered about the utility of setting a landscape feature target in*

absence of a precise definition of the types of landscape features that count and while a methodology to measure these features is under development. G. Schilthuis (AGRI.C1) underlined the importance of the CAP contributing to the Green Deal in an ambitious way, based on evidence, and of ensuring a level playing field in implementing the strategy.

Target on organic farming

DG AGRI.C1 presentation by [REDACTED]

Member States raised a range of questions about the setting of a national value for organic area, including consequences on EU agricultural productivity resulting from increasing organic area, the level of ambition expected by the Commission and the role of organic aquaculture.

- Some Member States considered lack of market opportunities would lead to setting of a modest national target for organic. The Commission clarified that market opportunities should be seen more broadly than only the national situation, looking at the EU market as whole, and argued that Farm to Fork actions to stimulate demand for organic food should be considered.*
- Some Member States inquired on the organic action plan. The Commission representative clarified that the organic action plan is meant to complement the action of Member States and support them to enhance consumption and production, while developing organic in EU as a model, although not having legally binding provisions.*

Target on nutrient loss

DG AGRI.C1 presentation by [REDACTED]

- Member State questions focused on the relevance of the indicators for the EU target on nutrient losses, the reference periods chosen, the challenges of a “zero pollution” target and the role of soil fertility and the 20% reduction of fertiliser use. Some Member States implicitly challenged the target as such, underlining that plants need nutrients and fertilisers.*
- The Commission representative clarified many aspects of the proposed indicators, and stressed the linkages between the targets, in that increased organic area, as well as rules under the future CAP (conditionality, the Farm nutrient management tool FaST, measures under both pillars) will contribute to reduce nutrient losses.*
- The Commission representatives also stressed the complexity of the nutrient cycle and its impact on water quality, hence the importance of both indicators, including the share of groundwater monitoring stations with N >50 mg/l. It was clarified that agricultural and environmental policy (CAP & Nitrates directive) work hand in hand in this context.*

Target on landscape features

DG AGRI.C1 presentation by [REDACTED] focusing not only on the target, but also on ongoing work to improve measurement and mapping of landscape features.

- *Many Member States were critical on (1) landscape feature data presented in the Communication of last December (The Commission clarified that the presented data are not complete, as they only concern linear landscape features and fallow land); (2) the absence of a definition of landscape features that would count towards the target; and (3) the absence of methodology to measure the landscape features.*
- *The absence of clarity of a definition of “High Diversity Landscape Features” was clearly recognised by Commission representatives and Member States asked to be involved in ongoing discussions on its definition. The Commission representative challenged the conclusion drawn by Belgium that a national value on this topic was clearly not needed, as it is unclear how to set it. On the contrary, Member States were encouraged to set a national value and present the available data and evidence at national level.*
- *Other questions addressed the links between the CAP (e.g. GAEC 9) and the 10% landscape feature target, the use of a pro rata system and coefficients for counting features.*

Target on rural broadband

DG AGRI.C1, presentation by [REDACTED].

- *The Commission representative provided three key messages on the issue of the broadband target: that this is a peculiar target among the Green Deal targets due to a) its thematic orientation (innovation & economic development), with a large role for the Next Generation EU and Structural funds; b) the fact that this concerns an older target (similar EU targets have been around since 2010); c) that the target is at 100% coverage for 2025 (e.g. full coverage in all Member States).*
- *Member States raised only a few questions, which focused on indicators and on the need to consider digitalisation beyond broadband infrastructure. Member States specific questions from Austria and Hungary would be followed up bilaterally (geohub).*

4. Conclusions/recommendations/opinions

The Commission representative acknowledged the sometimes-critical questions from the Member States, but also underlined the importance of creating ambitious strategic plans for the next programming period of the CAP. In reference to the opening remarks, [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] (AGRI.C1) explained that the key question is not whether Member States ‘refuse’ targets, but rather about building a new partnership between Commission, Member States and stakeholders to create successful CAP Strategic Plans.

5. Next steps

The Commission stands ready to support Member States in their preparation of the CAP strategic plans, in particular through its geohub structure

6. Next meeting

So far a next meeting is not foreseen, but the Commission has shown its openness to provide further guidance to Member States on this topic, if so requested.

7. List of participants

See annex.

(e-signed)

Tassos HANIOTIS

List of participants– Minutes
*Meeting of the Meeting of the meeting of the Expert Group for Horizontal Questions
concerning the CAP
Subgroup Simplification
11 February 2020*

BELGIQUE/BELGIË (Belgium)	SPW ARNE DPEAI	1
	Vlaamse Overheid - Departement Landbouw en Visserij	1
БЪЛГАРИЯ (Bulgaria)	Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry	2
ČESKO (Czechia)	Ministry of Agriculture	7
DANMARK (Denmark)	The Danish Agricultural Agency	2
DEUTSCHLAND (Germany)	Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture	7
EESTI (Estonia)	Ministry of Rural Affairs	7
ÉIRE/IRELAND (Ireland)	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	9
ΕΛΛΑΔΑ (Greece)	HELLENIC PAYING AGENCY - OPEKEPE	7
	Managing Authority of Rural Development	2
	Ministry of Rural Development & Food	6
ESPAÑA (Spain)	Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación	11
FRANCE (France)	Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	5
	Permanent representation	1
HRVATSKA (Croatia)	Ministry of Agriculture	3
ITALIA (Italy)	Ministero delle Politiche Agricole Alimentari e Forestali	5
ΚΥΠΡΟΣ (Cyprus)	CYPRUS AGRICULTURAL PAYMENTS ORGANISATION	3
	Department of Agriculture - Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment	3
LATVIJA (Latvia)	Ministry of Agriculture	12
	Permanent Representation of the Republic of Latvia to the EU	2
	State Plant Protection Service	2
LIETUVA (Lithuania)	Ministry of agriculture	7
LUXEMBOURG (Luxembourg)	Ministère de l'Agriculture, de la Viticulture et du Développement rural	3
MAGYARORSZÁG (Hungary)	Ministry of Agriculture	9
MALTA (Malta)	EAFRD Managing Authority, Office of the Prime Minister	2
	Strategy and Implementation Division, Office of the Prime Minister	3
NETHERLANDS	Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Foodquality Common Agricultural Policy	5

ÖSTERREICH (Austria)	Bundesministerium für Landwirtschaft, Regionen und Tourismus	6
POLSKA (Poland)	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	6
PORTUGAL (Portugal)	GPP	2
ROMÂNIA (Romania)	MINISTERUL AGRICULTURII SI DEZVOLTARII RURALE	2
	REPREZENTANTA PERMANENTA A ROMANIEI LA BRUXELLES	1
SLOVENIJA (Slovenia)	Ministry for agriculture, forestry and food	9
	Permanent Representation of Rep. Slovenia to the EU	1
SLOVENSKO (Slovakia)	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic	10
	Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the EU	2
	Research Institute of Agricultural and Food Economics, National Agricultural and Food Centre.	1
SUOMI/FINLAND (Finland)	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	6
SVERIGE (Sweden)	Ministry for Enterprise and Innovation	2
	Swedish Board of Agriculture	3
<i>COUNCIL of the EU</i>		0
<i>EU PARLIAMENT</i>		0