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HEALTH & CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

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**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
“SEEDS AND PROPAGATING MATERIAL FOR AGRICULTURE,
HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY” HELD ON 5 MARCH 2010**

Chairperson: Ms Päivi Mannerkorpi

All the Member States were present. CPVO, Norway and EFTA secretariat participated as observers.

1. Discussion on possible amendments to Annexes I and II to the Council Directive on the marketing of seed potatoes

Concerning the alignment of the Council Directive of the marketing of seed potatoes with the new United Nations - Economic Committee for Europe (UN-ECE) standard, with a view to having a better harmonisation and more stringent requirements, following a further request of the Commission, 18 Member States have sent in data on their national standards for the marketing of seed potatoes and four other ones have sent recent data to the UN-ECE. The Commission is compiling the information in overview tables with a view to further technical discussions. It was agreed to convene a working group on the issue to assist the Commission in preparing a proposal for the review of Annexes I and II.

2. Discussion on possible measures to allow marketing of mixtures of varieties of vegetable seed belonging to a same species

Austria explained its request to allow the marketing of mixtures of varieties of vegetable seed belonging to a same species in application of Article 26 (3) of Council Directive 2002/55/EC. A number of Member States supported the request. The quality of the seed should comply with the provisions of the Directive and the buyer of seed should be correctly informed. The Commission invited the Member States to submit comments by 19 March 2010, with the intention to prepare a document for discussion in the next Standing Committee meeting.

3. Update on the S & PM review

The Commission provided information on the impact assessment, in particular on the next steps for the external study of the organisation and cost aspects of variety registration systems in the Member States, as well as on some preparatory work for legal drafting of the new legislation. A study on certification will be carried out with internal staff. Currently the main focus of the impact assessment is on scope, problem

definition and options for review. The various options that are identified, ranging from strong uniform EU rules and intervention (centralisation), to a nearly total passing of responsibilities to the sector itself (de-centralisation), will then have to be assessed for their likely economic, social and environmental impacts.

4. Discussion on the release of MS from the obligation to apply certain Directives on the marketing of seed and propagating material in respect of certain species

The Commission is in the process of making an inventory of legislation in force in particular, on the specific Commission decisions releasing the Member States from the obligation to implement the provisions of EU legislation for certain plant species not produced in the respective Member States. The Commission presented its analysis of the situation in the form of tables and asked the Member States to inform the Commission by the 31 March 2010, whether the exemptions are still valid.

5. Discussion and a possible opinion on a draft Commission Directive providing for certain conditions for marketing of fodder plant seed mixtures intended for use in the preservation of the natural environment (doc. SANCO/10575/09)

The Commission informed about its ongoing internal consultation and gave an update on the approach to the preservation of seed mixtures on the basis of a working document. Different points were discussed, in particular the definitions, quality requirements for directly harvested seed and the indication of germination rate. The Commission's intention is to proceed with the proposal as soon as possible.

6. Discussion and a possible opinion on a draft Commission Decision releasing Latvia from certain obligations to apply Council Directives 66/402/EEC and 2002/57/EC in respect of *Avena strigosa* Schreb., *Brassica nigra* (L.) Koch and *Helianthus annuus* L. (doc. SANCO/10033/10)

The purpose of the Decision is to reduce administrative burden incurred by the Latvian competent authorities. The Committee gave a favourable opinion on the draft Commission Decision by unanimity.

Vote: Favourable opinion by unanimity.

7. Discussion and a possible opinion on a draft Commission Regulation (EC) No/... laying down detailed rules for the granting of Union financial assistance for carrying out Union comparative tests and trials (doc. SANCO/10806/09)

The Commission informed the Member States that internal administrative discussions are ongoing and that it hopes to proceed with the comparative trials as planned.

8. Miscellaneous

- 8.1 Slovenian delegate requested information about the listing of vine varieties. The Commission intends to publish the list on the basis of notifications received from the Member States so far. A reminder will be sent to the Member States to send the requested information as soon as possible.

- 8.2 French delegate asked about the status of *Solanum phureja* in the Common Catalogue. Whereas Council Directive 2002/56/EC on the marketing of seed potatoes does not refer to a particular species, all potato varieties in the Common Catalogue of varieties of agricultural species are listed under the botanical name *Solanum tuberosum* L. However, it seems that some potato varieties in the Common Catalogue should in fact be characterised as *Solanum phureja*. The Commission invited the Member States to check the varieties that are listed in their national catalogues and to inform the Commission by 19 March 2010 of any variety that indeed would have to be moved to a separate list of varieties belonging to *S. phureja* or to an interspecific hybrid of *S. tuberosum* and *S. phureja*.
- 8.3 Swedish delegate asked about the implementation of Commission Directive 2008/124/EC after its codification and the number of generations allowed for the production of certified seed for linseed. The Commission responded that the provision of the Directive allows two generations.
- 8.4 CPVO representative informed about the launching of the new version of the centralised data base for denomination testing 25 February 2010. This service can also be used by the authorities responsible for registration of varieties to ask CPVO's advice on proposed denominations of varieties.
- 8.5 Italian delegate presented a situation when for the same variety an application for registration has been rejected in one Member State and an application has been submitted to another Member State to authorise the placing on the market of seed, for test and trials in agricultural enterprises, belonging to varieties for which an application for entry in the national catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species or vegetable species has been submitted (application of Decision 2004/842/EC on 'not yet listed varieties'). After a discussion it was concluded that transparency is important, e.g. the Member States should inform each other about their rejections for registration in the context of the procedure of Decision 2004/842/EC.
- 8.6 Italian delegate provided information on the forthcoming 39th meeting of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Seed Potatoes on 15 to 17 March 2010 in Geneva and on the main items of its agenda.
- 8.7 Polish delegate reminded of the Annual Meeting of the Heads of EU and EFTA/EEA Seed Certification Agencies on 9 to 11 June 2010 in Warsaw, Poland.