

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
“SEEDS AND PROPAGATING MATERIAL FOR AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE AND
FORESTRY” HELD ON 10 NOVEMBER 2006**

Chairman: Mr. Valvassori.

All Member States were present except Luxemburg, which was represented by Belgium.

Bulgaria, Romania, Norway and CPVO participated as observers.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A WORKING PROGRAMME IN THE AREAS COVERED BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE (AGRICULTURAL SEEDS, SEED POTATOES, FOREST REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL, MATERIAL FOR VEGETATIVE PROPAGATION OF VINE).

The Committee started to make an inventory of the Member States' suggestions. Several suggestions are also placed in the framework of the discussions on Better Regulation with the Council. The Member States' suggestions were classified according to the following criteria:

- a) the legal nature of the initiative (amendments to the Council legislation to be adopted by the Commission according to the Standing Committee procedure, implementing measures including a possible revision of these in force and temporary experiments for the purpose of seeking alternatives to certain provisions of the Council directives;
- b) the kind of reproductive material i.e. agricultural seed of agricultural plants, seed potatoes, vegetable seed, vegetable propagating material other than seed, forest reproductive material and material for the vegetative propagation of the vine.

The Committee envisaged continuing this work, which will be extended to cover:

- priority criteria;
- working methodology.

2. DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION ON A TEMPORARY EXPERIMENT WITH REGARD TO INCREASING THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT OF A LOT OF CERTAIN FODDER PLANT SEEDS UNDER DIRECTIVE 66/401/EEC.

Council Directive 66/401/EEC of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of fodder plant seed provides for the maximum weight of a lot in the context of seed testing. In the specific case of seed of grasses, such a maximum weight is of 10 tonnes.

The same Directive provides for the organisation of temporary experiments under specified conditions with the aim of seeking improved alternatives to certain provisions set out in this Directive.

Current international practice, namely the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) experiment to derogate on the maximum size of gramineae seed lots, as adopted by the Council of the OECD on 24 May 2006, and the ISTA (International Seed Testing Association)/ISF (International Seed Federation) experiment on herbage seed lot size, approved by the ISTA Executive

Committee on 10 February 2006, permit procedures whereby the maximum weight of a lot may be increased for grasses.

The Draft Commission Decision permits a temporary experiment with regard to a possible increase in the maximum weight of a lot of grasses (from 10 to 25 tonnes), providing that certain conditions specified in the same Decision are met.

Voting: favourable opinion by unanimity.

3. DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION AUTHORISING ROMANIA TO POSTPONE THE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2002/53/EC WITH REGARD TO THE MARKETING OF SEEDS OF CERTAIN VARIETIES OF AGRICULTURAL PLANT SPECIES.

Article 42 of the Act of Accession of Bulgaria and Romania provides that if transitional measures are necessary to facilitate the transition from the existing regime in the new Member States to that resulting from the application of the Community veterinary and phytosanitary rules, such measures shall be adopted by the Commission in accordance with the relevant committee procedure as determined in the applicable legislation (in this case in accordance with the procedure of the Standing Committee on Seeds).

Council Directive 2002/53/EC lays down that seeds of varieties of the plant species covered by the various Council Directives on the marketing of seed may be marketed only if the requirements of the said Directives have been met.

It has appeared that in Romania certain agricultural varieties are not currently listed in the national catalogue in accordance with the provisions of the above Council Directive.

By official letter submitted on 28 September 2006, Romania asked to be authorized to postpone for a period of three years following the dated of accession the application of Directive 2002/53/EC with regard to the marketing in its territory of seed of certain varieties which have not been officially accepted in accordance with provisions of that Directive. During that period such seed shall not be marketed in the territory of other Member States.

The draft Commission Decision aims to adopt such transitional measures of three years in Romania to continue the marketing in its own territory of the varieties of agricultural plant species, as specified in the request.

Voting: favourable opinion by unanimity.

4. MISCELLANEOUS.

The Committee noted:

- (a) The draft proposal for a new OECD scheme for Forest Reproductive Material, as agreed by the Biennial meeting of Representatives of the National Designated Authorities, Siófok, Hungary, 5-6 October 2006 (SANCO E.1).

- (b) The summary of the discussions at the Extended Bureau, Specialised Section on Standardisation of Seed Potatoes, Economic Commission for Europe, held in Arras, France, from 16 to 18 October 2006 and the report of the Specialised Section, 7-9 November 2006 (PG Bianchi, IT).
- (c) An information of the follow-up of the request of 25 September 2006 as regards the permission to market wheat seeds not satisfying the requirements in respect of the minimum germination: the request was cancelled (E-mail HU, 11 October 2006).
- (d) A progress report on the work (SANCO E.1) to ensure a publication beginning 2007 of a supplement to the Common catalogues of varieties of Agricultural and Vegetable Species listing all the varieties for which the acceptance was granted in Bulgaria and Romania in accordance with the principle of Directives 2002/53/EC and 2002/55/EC.
- (e) An initiative (SANCO E.1) to convoke a Group of Rapporteurs (possibly experts from CZ, ES, FR, NL and PL) to provide for a new structure of the Common catalogue of Vegetable Species, once the Directive 2002/55/EC as voted in the previous meeting of the Committee is revised.
- (f) A request exempting UK from applying the Directive 2002/55/EC to seeds of Shallots, Japanese bunching onion/Welsh onion, Garlic, Chives and Rhubarb.

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