

Final Minutes - CDG Environment and climate change

Friday 13 November 2015

Chairperson: Dorota Metera, IFOAM EU – acting in the absence of Faustine Bas-Defossez, EEB

1. Approval of the agenda and the minutes of the meeting of 12/06/2015

The Chair asked the members if they approve the agenda. The agenda was approved.

The Chair then asked the members if they approve the minutes. EFFAT said that the pages of the minutes are not numbered and that it would be better if they were numbered in the future. In addition, EFFAT made a small correction to the minutes of the previous in the 2nd round of questions, point 8, the word ‘workers’ should be replaced by the word ‘farmers’ and it was also pointed out that it was difficult to access documents via CIRCABC. EURAF added one word ‘herbicides are not ALL bad for bees’. The minutes were then approved.

The Commission replied by saying that minutes were received on time and that the experts had 15 working days to respond and make amendments. There appears to be no problem accessing documents via CIRCABC.

2. Election of Chair and Vice-chairs

The current chair and vice-chair presented themselves for re-election to the CDG. This included Faustine Bas-Defossez, EEB, Dorota Metera, IFOAM EU and Martin Laengauer (COPA). Each presented themselves to the group for re-election (with the exception of Faustine Defossez-Bas whose presentation was made by Trees Robins of Birdlife Europe in her absence). There was a unanimous vote in favour of all three candidates.

A - Information points

a) International year of soil

The Commission (DG ENVI) gave a presentation on the international actions related to the International Year of Soils including relevant actions on soil set out under the 7th Environmental Action Plan (see PPT presentation).

Slow Food asked about policy integration and how far we are with policies on soil, specifically in terms of the CAP.

COPA stated that the International Year of Soils is a good platform for discussions and debates with farmers in the UK. It helped with the organisation of events and different sectors (arable and grassland) and case studies were put together for soil management and one of the members spoke in Green Week about decisions regarding soil. An inventory of measures was also put together and they asked at what stage of the discussion, farmers could get actively involved.

Commission: A lot of things have been achieved since 2006; i.e. new policies with specific provision on soils. Under CAP, there is a new provision for soil protection and also on the RDPs, there are dedicated measures to soil protection. We need this inventory/assessment because it is hard to have an overview of how these measures are implemented in member states.

IFOAM EU asked where the work on soil fits in the perspective work on Land as a Resource. They also added that since the Soil Directive has been blocked for so long many of the pressing soil issues could now be tackled through this Initiative. This include addressing land access to further support

and develop sustainable land management. Has the EC decided to postpone this work or will it be part of the EC 2016 work programme?

Commission: The Commission continues to work on that with JRC and the European Environment Agency and now, there are internal discussions on how to continue with this work, so no more information is available at the moment.

COGECA asked if we can see the participants from the Soil protection expert group for Member States.

Commission: there will be interactions with stakeholders, through the expert group that was created because it will facilitate the access to information for Member States. Interviews and meetings with stakeholders and also, research studies will be presented. It will be an open process and the idea is to gather as much information as possible, because the existing knowledge dates back to 2002-2004 and since then, there have been a lot of developments.

Birdlife Europe asked regarding 2016, if the Commission is planning to look specifically in the impacts of the costs from CAP including inaction on soil management.

Commission: The slide maybe was misleading, it is considered to be part of the inventory that they will launch very soon. The study should be in 2016, the kick-off meeting will take place in December. It will look specifically on CAP's provision on soil, and there are a lot ongoing studies by DG AGRI and DG ENVI on Standards of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) under cross compliance as well as measures under Rural Development Programmes (RDPs).

There is an ongoing evaluation of CAP's impact on economic terms and also in terms of land degradation. 'Soil' as a natural capital will be analysed in more depth.

ELO stated that forests protect the soils. Is there any action going to be taken in this respect for the forests and the people sustainably managing these forests?

Commission: aware of the contribution of forestry management to soil protection. But there is no initiative to analyse it at this moment.

COPA said that it is crucial to protect the soil for French farmers. In France, they are setting up measures to oblige that when there is a motorway or something major being built, there should be some sort of compensation that does not affect agricultural production. They also added that it is very important in Germany to raise awareness on this and they have had the possibilities to look at this and discuss the use and fruitfulness of the soil and achieve certainty for the soil and act before major constructions are made.

Commission: French initiative is very interesting and they would be keen to have more information, study or results.

b) COP21

The Commission (DG CLIMA) gave an overview of its activities for the United Nations Conference on Climate (COP21) set to take place in December 2015. The EU is looking for legally binding agreements for all parties, transparency and increase towards the long term, international support for climate resilient development. The objective is to stay below 2° C rise of temperature.

The Kyoto Convention was seen as a top-down approach led by developed countries, but this time it should be more bottom-up, including developing countries pledging to meet goals. The Commission

recently took part in a pre-event in Morocco to discuss the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). These are set to be finalised at the COP21.

The Paris agreement will help idealise the INDCs and will start a framework where this process can be developed from 2020 and onwards. The US-China agreement is very important because two of the biggest emitters are working together, and recently France and China started the discussions. However it will be a challenge to have a robust legally binding agreement.

There is a linkage to the soil discussion, the 5th IPCC report showed that land use is responsible for a share of emissions. Therefore, we need to harness this potential to reach the goal. There are also major initiatives that target to reduce deforestation. Some countries work on land management improvements including productivity and efficiency.

The Commission said that currently the negotiating text is 50 + pages, and the final text is supposed to be 20 + pages. The following elements are included in the text: food security, land use, reducing deforestation, degraded lands. At the moment there are references to land in the text both explicitly and implicitly. The EU believes it is important to have robust rules covering land use. Compared to other sectors, land can absorb and remove emissions and because of that good focus is required to make sure that we are accounting for actual mitigation efforts.

Agriculture is not in the agenda, due to main focus on a global agreement. It will be discussed in Paris and the agreement is also expected to implicitly mention the agriculture, forestry and other land use sectors. There are hot topics on land e.g. malpractice on peatlands contribute to GHG emissions. Based on the conclusions of the European Council in October 2014 the EU supports recognition of food security under a future Climate agreement. Currently the UNFCCC text mentions food production, but food security will be important to be mentioned because it is wider.

CAN Europe: good to see that the EU is supporting food security, but will there be something more specific with more strengthened language in the Paris agreement – not as a preamble text but in Article 2 for example?

Commission: During the negotiations in Bonn in September a proposal was made by the EU on food security. The reference will in the end be more likely be part of the preamble and not in the objectives.

ECVC: pointed out that discussions have started shifting towards 3°C temperature rise. The geopolitical context overlooks that USA and China might not respond to the EU's already limited ambitions. As representatives of small farmers, we recall that we all have responsibility, thinking that agriculture represents 25% of GHG emissions.

EFFAT: Is there a reference to sustainable agriculture or the bio-economy which is very important also for trade union and workers. What is the reference to job creation?

Commission: In the current negotiation text sustainable agriculture is not there because it is very sensitive, but it is implicitly in other areas of the text. Bioeconomy is seen as new terminology and outside the EU is not understood. There is a reference to fair work and fair environment, whilst efforts to decarbonise and become more sustainable through a good global agreement will lead us in this direction.

IFOAM EU: In the context of both the COP and the forthcoming Climate and Energy package is the inclusion of LULUCF the only objective that the Commission has for the agriculture sector? Just including the sector which is a carbon sink already is not very ambitious. Indirect emissions usually

not clearly taken into account e.g. feed imports and pesticides use. We need to see more seriously the address of agri-food issues in a wider context –for example when we talk about food security we address it from the perspective of food sovereignty. Agriculture is part of the problem but it is also part of the solution but it needs to show a certain level of ambition.

Commission: Fertiliser production is accounted in national inventories along with domestic transport, but not at international level. This works when a country has a good robust inventory system. If we have an international deal, this would be included. The indirect impacts of agriculture is why we need to globally monitor land use and land use change. For indirect emissions it will be important to monitor global land coverage.

At international level the focus is on Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) - a term from the 2006 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines describing activities which contribute to anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions. It combines both the LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) and Agriculture sectors. Agriculture is sensitive and LULUCF is especially problematic because some countries don't like it. At EU level we are currently looking at the rules agreed under Kyoto and Durban as part of our deliberations for 2030 Climate and Energy Package, but no decision has been made by the Commission.

Slow Food: over 360 organisations have signed a letter for COP 21 that we should question Climate Smart Agriculture and promote agroecology.

Commission: well aware of the letter signed by civil society organisations regarding concerns about the Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture. Other organisations and Member States have joined the alliance and it is better to argue from the inside and not the outside. The Commission is just an observer in the global alliance.

COPA: Finland is concerned about climate accounting rules particularly peatlands. In Finland, we call for fair and transparent accounting rules for cultivated soils. These rules should be focused and the European Council has also said that these rules should be transparent for all parties. We very much support this and we would like to highlight these issues. Regarding peatlands, it can be concerning but management plays a major role. There should be limitations for peatlands used, based on local climatic and management conditions.

Commission: Efforts needs to take place to cover our land and forestry including agricultural land and peatlands by moving to a process to better records for emissions from grassland and crop land. Under the Kyoto protocol, action for these two was voluntary and for forestry mandatory. There is now a process ongoing for more complete accounting in the EU, some countries have chosen not to engage. As part of this process we don't want to see the drainage of new peatlands.

Fertilizers Europe: After the consultation which option does the Commission prefer regarding LULUCF? We opted for the second option which was the pillar of agriculture and LULUCF because is more relevant than buildings and transport. . Fertilizers Europe suggested to make a presentation in the next meeting on tangible examples of actions to reduce GHG and ammonia emissions, saying that it is good to know that the industry recognizes its footprint and is taking action.

EFFAT: is organising an event on 4/12 at the COP about integrating the social dimension into climate action based on green job creation.

Commission: Pathways to try to decarbonise globally will lead to opportunities to address social challenges. The COP21 discussions make a lot of reference to issues related to gender and indigenous people.

EURAF: keen that LULUCF was mentioned in the Commission's non-paper which accompanied the DG CLIMA consultation as it highlights what the Commission's conclusions might be or tend to be. Since IPCC recommended Pillar 2 in 2006, can we presume that the Commission is in favour of a common approach on both policy and agriculture?

Birdlife Europe: Can the Commission comment on its thinking at EU level and particularly elements related to LULUCF? Birdlife believes that if everything comes together under one pillar it will be a big problem, so they are waiting to see how the Commission will proceed.

COPA: There is imbalance between what is being achieved and the burdens that are being calculated in the agricultural sector. In Germany, agricultural methane emissions have been discussed. Five million hectares of green area cannot be used because if we had cows they would produce emissions. This is a clear trade-off in terms of carbon sequestration.

Commission: Inclusion of LULUCF will probably not be part of the text as it gets very technical and it is only a 20-page agreement. Need for work after Paris to discuss where countries in the EU are taking different approaches in land use. Concerns raised by civil society can be addressed in that forum. The Commission is looking at a convergence of approaches as we move forward as we have to harness the mitigation potential of the LULUCF sector.

The results of the online stakeholder consultation were discussed in a 2-day workshop, so discussions and further consultations are ongoing. This work is done together with DG AGRI including a lot of bilateral discussions with industry, civil society and Member States.

COPA: Need to focus on growth and employment, global solutions orientated towards production of food, efficient production, and R&D, does the Commission focus on these aspects?

Commission: Currently the objective of UNFCCC is to stabilise global emissions linked to food production. Based on a decarbonisation pathway, we have to see where we can mitigate if possible. At EU level, we have reduced agricultural emissions by 24% since 1990. We have also increased production in different areas and the Commission is fully aware of the future mitigation challenges in agriculture. However, there are new developments in research and technology, more efficient use of fertilisers, progress is needed on ruminant management, better breeding, feeding practices.

A lot of the H2020 research, focuses on improvements in agriculture and land management and forestry. Growth is also a priority for the Commission. As an efficient production approach, EU agriculture is in a good position with a lot of progress met on co-benefits in respect of natural resources such as air and water. Nevertheless, new research and accompanying knowledge transfer is needed.

COGECA: Importance should be given to the European Council mandate from October 2014 that shows the multifunctional character of agriculture and limited mitigating potential. Agriculture will be negatively impacted from climate change and the Earth Policy Institute calculated that for every °C increase in global temperature we will see a decline of 17% in soya and corn production. So it is clear that we need more investment in adaptation. Since we all agree that food security is important for the growing population, it should be part of the discussion on agriculture and on a decision making process.

Commission: EU agriculture has contributed significantly in terms of mitigation efforts and this should be cost-effective. Adaptation is also an important part of the discussion for agriculture and forestry, and should not be underestimated e.g. pest diseases, migration of diseases. DG CLIMA and DG AGRI are mainstreaming climate funds so that adaptation and mitigation are treated similarly.

EU forestry levels are unlike other countries where forests are cleared to increase agricultural land. For example, Brazil faces problems with droughts because of the Amazonian deforestation. The EU is supporting efforts to reduce deforestation through the UN's Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) and climate finance instruments.

COPA: In Europe we try to achieve these targets and increase, there are countries with considerable renewable targets, and on the other hand we are developing biomass in forms of energy sources. Agriculture and forestry are contributing to the decarbonisation of the economy. Are these elements part of the climate accounting system?

Commission: This is linked to the LULUCF accounting which has improved a lot, but needs further work.

Eurogroup for Animal: the scope for the actions seems a bit limited and kind of untargeted and there is huge potential to expand actions beyond into areas such as sustainable diets, certain foods for example contribute disproportionately to climate change e.g. industrial animal production. We are concerned that in order to develop more efficient systems, animal welfare will be overlooked. In the context of these negotiations will animal welfare be included? It is important that we increase transparency and let people know what they are eating, address food waste, and develop more sustainable food policies, apart from land use to improve the situation.

Commission: Sustainable diets references to consumption patterns are in the current text but people have to be realistic. It takes one country to refuse and it collapses. So certain sensitive issues might not make it in the end. In the agricultural discussions, animal welfare is included.

CAN Europe: At EU level, there are key concerns for food security and increasing production and that we shouldn't negatively affect other countries wanting to improve their food security. Is this issue being addressed by the Commission in the negotiations?

Commission: Food production is a component of food security.

COPA: There is a lack of soil carbon data. This was a key highlight of the soil conference at Milan Expo. How can we improve the collection of soil carbon data?

Commission: Monitoring the carbon is important, but Member States prefer to go with a territorial approach in terms of monitoring.

ECVC: NGOs were working on the agenda for solutions upstream however, they weren't allowed to participate in the discussion. Why did this happen? There also significant issues with regards to transport emissions.

Commission: In the past, some countries (e.g. Japan) have requested that no civil society want observers in the room. However, there will be observers at the COP21 in Paris. Transport emissions are not fully resolved but certainly it will be dealt with in the future.

c) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and impacts on European Agriculture

The Commission (DG AGRI) made a presentation on relevant aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals for agriculture.

Commission: An agreement on 2030 Sustainable Development agenda was reached in New York before summer which follows up on the Millennium Development Goals. One of the key goals related to agriculture is Goal 2 to eradicate hunger in the next 15 years.

The 0 hunger challenge was initiated by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in October 2014 when celebrating the 70th birthday of FAO. There are huge challenges but it is achievable to end hunger by 2030 and end all forms of malnutrition. DG AGRI is left perplexed with the target to double agricultural productivity by 2030 as doubling productivity in the EU would have major impact on the environment. As a result, the Commission needs to carefully analyse it and see impacts in sustainability based on the idea that if the world wants double productivity the EU should assist less productive countries.

Other challenges facing the agricultural sector in the implementation of the new SDGs include better integration of private money, sustainable investments by agri-business and the avoidance of land grabbing.

Strong focus on investments by European agribusiness particularly farmers' organisations in Africa. Importance of increasing the exports of developing countries, aggressive trade policy where trade becomes a vector of growth.

Other key goals include Goal 15 which promotes the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. In total there are 17 goals and 169 targets and the Commission is now engaging with FAO on agricultural indicators with the idea to create more targets based on the indicators. There could be up to 100 indicators and there are concerns that the indicators might create unreasonable costs. Indicator development is expected to be completed by September 2016.

ECVC: problem that large investment by agribusiness leads to small farmers disappearing. FAO has said that small farm agriculture has good productivity and 75 % of the population could be fed with small farming. In less developed countries, for example Morocco, French companies were allowed to be established and cultivate crops in Saharan areas and this was some form of colonisation. The Commission seems to forget fundamental targets of agriculture in the world. Let them promote local and natural seeds and breeds and not the use of GMO technology.

Commission: The investments in Africa were decided based on 2014 Declaration of African Union in meeting in Malabo. This included a focus on a transformative rural agenda. As not enough money from donors, remittances and public funds is available the idea is to reach out to the private sector because it represents 60 % of the economy. Investments orientated towards sustainability and be compatible with the development ambitions and the people there. The Commission held a conference at Expo Milan on agribusiness investments, along with farmers' organisations. Partnerships between different stakeholders e.g. farmers, NGOs and industry are already taking place e.g. Care DK with Arla to improve milk production in the Sahel. Yesterday in Valetta, there was a declaration and an action plan approved to facilitate massive private investments in African agriculture and trade, in order to drive the transformative agenda. This comes from the Malabo declaration. Reference to maintaining the genetic diversity of seeds and improving the quality of seeds in African countries is also included.

Slow food agrees with ECVC, targets under Goal 2 make no reference to enhancing access to genetic resources which is a big concern? In addition, there is no reference to food sovereignty in the text. We are also wasting 1/3 of total food production and it is due to distribution.

Commission: Food waste is part of the work of the G20. In developed countries the focus is on food waste due to loss at the level of retailers and consumers. In developing countries, the emphasis is on loss in post-harvest because of lack of infrastructure and storage facilities.

Right to food is implied, through ending hunger. Driven by the same idea.

EURAF commented that it is a comprehensive document, there are 12 mentions of forestry, 10 of agriculture, but no mention of agroforestry. Point of information, double agricultural productivity, goal 2 article 2.3 reference to women and indigenous people, small scale components.

Commission: Agroforestry is not mentioned but the text should be examined in total and take into consideration that it concerns the whole world.

ELO said that it is not possible to double the productivity of European agriculture. They added that looking to Africa for investments is a good idea. With the help of the chemical industry the goal to increase productivity can be achieved.

COPA: Europe has the fundamental principles, that with fewer natural resources we can increase the production, therefore the Goal 2 targets are valid for Europe because there is an element of responsibility. We are dependent on imports from other countries, and we are able to use the land well and increase production in a sustainable way.

EEB: Doubling European production is not possible and even if it was we are past wanting to destroy our environment. We need to produce more with less and make it more environmentally friendly. In the EU and North America the production increases were based primarily on fertilisers and breeding, but research has shown that such an increase is possible only in specific climate and geographic areas. In humid and warm climates, we cannot achieve such increases with the same means. Soil erosion is also much more advanced with these production methods.

Fertilizers Europe: Highlighted that there is confusion in the group. First of all, FAO talks about a 60 % increase in global production and not in Europe as the Commission representative stated. Secondly, in the previous statements from the colleagues there is a confusion between production and productivity which are two different things Waste and distribution to be improved as well as therecycling of nutrients on farms. In the last 20 years, the consumption of mineral fertilizers have decreased without an impact on the yields. The reason for that is that our farmers apply the fertilizers closer to the plant needs (higher nutrient use efficiency).

Pan Europe: Agricultural productivity is a ratio between outputs and inputs and therefore we need to push the discussion towards sustainable productivity.

Commission: Productivity is targeted, not production. Estimate is important. Production has to increase by 60% by 2050. Productivity is in relation to small scale food producers. We have a lot of small farms in the EU e.g. Romania and Bulgaria. Focus on doubling the productivity of pastoralists.

IFOAM EU: Now that the SDGs have been ratified at international level, what are the concrete next steps in terms of implementation at EU level consultation with stakeholders?

Commission: Concrete next steps: it will be done and can be done in groups like these, so you can table those items.

EFFAT: Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth is concerning as it talks about secure working environments but not health and safety. In France, national health and environmental plan links to Goal 3 on good health and well-being from the perspective of occupational health and safety. Goal 2

focuses on multiplying productivity or production levels. It does not focus on quality of productivity. If doubling productivity means more pesticides then it will have significant implications for health.

CEMA: Implementation needs to focus on producing more with less, making use of new technologies as well as informing farmers.

Commission: Agricultural machinery can support targeted pesticides and fertilisers use. Access to data can support new machinery developments in the EU and Africa. Efficiency increase, technology also available to developing countries.

COPA: If we want to address global food security in a consistent and responsible way, we in Europe have to do our share. In terms of productivity, this means physical output, as in tons per hectares, and this needs to be highlighted.

Commission: Our concept of the agricultural environment is as a living landscape of biological system based on different types of farming systems. It is hard to persuade international partners. FAO has a project on heritage systems. Biodiversity and farming are more of a European model.

d) National Emission Ceilings (NEC) Directive

The Commission gave a presentation on Air Quality Package (see PPT presentation).

Fertilizers Europe: Regarding the graph on ammonia emissions, if someone looks at the graph without knowing the issue he would think that mineral fertilizers is the main reason for ammonia emissions in Europe. The graph splits in many columns the organic part and consequently the column of mineral fertilizers is the one which stands out. It is good to know, nevertheless, that 80% of ammonia emissions come from organic sources while 20% come from mineral fertilizers. From this 20%, 18% is from urea-based fertilizers and only 2% from nitrated based fertilizers, like ammonium nitrate and calcium ammonium nitrate. In Europe we promote nitrate-based fertilizers because they are better from an agronomic (yields), environmental (GHG) and health (particulate matter which leads to ammonia emissions) perspective. .. We should remember that different fertilizer products have different impacts.

Commission: agrees on distinction between urea and nitrate which is set out under the Gothenburg Protocol.

PAN Europe: Ammonia emissions connects to the work of Nitrates Directive, but enteric methane is excluded. How can we achieve emissions targets if farms continue to get bigger?

Commission: Nitrates directives – a lot of measures can be good for both, but some trade-offs.

COPA: Ammonia emissions have a direct connection with livestock production with 80% of emissions coming from livestock sector. Up to 2020, production is going to increase e.g. with end of milk quotas and switch to greater commodity production for the markets. Targets for ammonia are rather ambitious, but the question is how feasible it is to achieve these targets. The feeling in Austria is that the targets are too ambitious and it is questionable whether these can be achieved. Are the models used appropriate as they don't properly take account of the costs e.g. animal welfare etc? We need to think about how we can achieve these different targets in the most effective way.

Commission: Methane targets – mainly about stables, manure and aerobic digestion. Growth is foreseen in the scenarios – but of course not doubling animals. If there is room to grow that much, there must be measures to do so in a sustainable way. The rationale is to address health and environment – it can still grow, but we will still have to address the issue and choices to be made.

EURAF: There are a host of mitigation measures – need to focus on importance of agroforestry for example grazing under a distributed canopy of trees can achieve a 50% reduction in emissions.

Commission: Annex III of the Air Quality Directive only refers to common known measures put in place, but obviously others too.

B/ Afternoon session: focused discussion on biodiversity

DG ENVI presentation of “Mid-term Review of the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020” report, focus on agricultural target and DG AGRI presentation of successful biodiversity actions.

The Commission gave a presentation on key aspects of the mid-term review related to agriculture - Target 3a (see PPT presentation). **Fertilizers Europe:** All farming types can be complementary organic and conventional in terms of supporting biodiversity. Farm Advisory Systems should be built to provide the tools that can modernize the agriculture. Agriculture is very diverse in Europe and we need innovation west e.g. through increasing awareness of tools and technologies for precise, for instance, fertilization. .

Commission: Agree that Farm Advisory Systems should be more than just about fulfilling basic environmental legislation. There many examples of countries where Farm Advisory Systems are becoming more advance.

EFFAT: Important to look at the choice of plant species, and choosing the right ground and conditions. Importance of old varieties which are not always seen as economically interesting. We need inventories of ecosystem services and to look at it from the point of the ecosystem e.g. aquatic environment.

Birdlife Europe: Will there be an in-depth study on biodiversity delivery as part of the review of greening? The European Environmental Bureau has commissioned a study on implementation of greening showing that Member States are consistent in choosing poor biodiversity measures.

EFNCP: When was the assessment of the conservation status of grassland was made? Was there an assessment of grassland under agri-environmental schemes, or types of schemes and were they were supported under CAP?

Commission: Mid-December notification from Member States set to take place – based on this there will be a study on effectiveness. Grasslands in Natura 2000. Not info on CAP. Certain lead of discrimination – intensification and abandonment of practice. Voluntary measures contribute to target 3a. There is a diversity of measures form light to dark green measures. Effectiveness depends on implementation.

COPA: Are voluntary measures covered under the review process? In England, there is a biodiversity strategy to 2020 and the government is looking to industry to provide data. We must be aware that some of the farmers’ activities go under the radar. This is something that makes a big difference because farmers are involved in relevant activities.

Commission: Greening is in the first year of implementation (2015) and it is a system that can be improved. There will be an evaluation on greening and Commissioner has said that it will be screened for simplification – not to weaken it, but to make it more effective and reduce red tape. A

public consultation will be launched shortly on greening as part of the process. Target is to be specifically defined under CAP implementation.

a) Practices that have been successful for biodiversity and where there is room for improvement

Copa: mentioned two examples. The first one 'Verbundvorhaben „Lebendige Agrarlandschaften – Landwirte gestalten Vielfalt“: „Lively agricultural landscapes - farmers create diversity” is funded by the German agency for biological diversity as part of the national biodiversity funding programme of Germany. Three model regions have been chosen by DBV - The German Farmers Association, in cooperation with its regional members: Rhineland, Münsterland and Mosel.

In cooperation with farmers on the ground production integrated measures to protect biodiversity will be implemented. From 2017 onwards demonstration farms and practices will be spread around in order to increase the awareness of the farming community towards successful practices. The implementation status: started during summer 2015 and the duration is 6 years.

The second example „Biodiversität für die Praxis““Biodiversity for the practice”, is a cooperation between DBV and the foundation Michael Otto for environment. 10 farms will be chosen as demonstration farms within Germany. The focus is on conventional farms that implemented new practices that are biodiversityfriendly and the goal is awareness raising within the farming community. The implementation status is in the application phase and the duration: 10 years. We strongly believe that we should not jump to conclusions because change is happening but we need to be persistent and patient in order to see it.

Slow Food: In Italy there is an initiative moving towards legal protection of agrobiodiversity. The aim is to develop a permanent registry of biodiversity and have better coordination of national actions and implementation in order to follow the trends and intervene beforehand. It seeks to promote collaboration at state level e.g. through different ministries –agriculture, environment, health. The initiative seeks to make reference to food communities and takes account of the different food chain stakeholders. This aim is also to support the role of farmers as guardians of biodiversity taking account of the economic impact and also the cultural dimension. For example, the importance of local cultivars adapted to local environment, which have less inputs and less impact on ecosystems.

ECVC: It is often forgotten that local groups and peasant farmers are preserving biodiversity. Organic farming can preserve this diversity and find markets. Civil society representations are forgotten and in some cases they are too small to carry on.

EFFAT: Involved in paying attention to diversity within in urbanisation plans. Directives focused on Nitrates, Water and Birds and Habitats are important legislative instruments to support biodiversity. There needs to be more awareness raising through training in schools, people working in public gardens and adequate importance given to training modules looking at harmful and invasive species and impact on local biodiversity.

In research studies, when working on gene technology need to take account of wild species and need to have training in the research sector. Moreover, therapeutic gardens and nature should be created in the urban areas in order to create awareness amongst the public. Reductions in urban lighting in order to minimise disturbance of biodiversity e.g. bats.

COPA: In the UK there is a [Campaign for the Farmed Environment](#) launched in 2009 encouraging farmers to put the right environmental measures in the right place. Partners include the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildlife Trusts with the development of a list of 10-15 different measures. Farmers, advisors and agronomists are in constant contact at local level and they take up measures on different themes e.g. pollinators. Government currently undertakes an independent survey of the impact for stakeholders and data collection takes place on an annual basis.

COPA: In France efforts are being made to allow farmers to identify biodiversity on their holdings.

Birdlife Europe: Developed many reports on successful biodiversity management which are available on their website etc. Involved in the research project with the Institute for European Environmental Policy - [PEGASUS](#) (Public Ecosystem Goods and Services from land management – Unlocking the Synergies). The project is using the concepts of public goods and ecosystem services to find new ways of thinking about how farmland and forests are managed. Czech partners have developed monitoring lists to recognise bird species, which have been very well received by farmers. Need to also look at problems where things are not going well. In Bulgaria, information is limited on the level of payments “up to approach” creates uncertainty for farmers and land managers. A similar problem has occurred in Poland under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programming period with significant cuts to agri-environment and organic farming schemes due to unavailability of funds only for the money to re-emerge months later and channelled to untargeted payments for less favoured areas (LFA).

COPA: it is important to have a holistic view when it comes to agriculture legislation because in the morning we were presented with a piece of legislation, which is the National Emission Ceiling Directive that will have a profound impact, among others, to grassland farming model. We cannot ask to implement unfeasible targets in emissions reduction without taking into account the trade-off, which in this case mean that we have to depopulate our grasslands.

EFNCP: A [book](#) has been developed on high nature value farmland areas from over 35 European countries outlining the importance of these areas and farming practices that preserve these areas. 60% grassland in Bulgaria is common grassland.

COPA: Important to ensure coherence in each policy area as certainty can prevent the trade-offs. In Denmark the “[Smart Natura](#)” a Danish EU supported LIFE project shows how farming and biodiversity can be integrated together. There are 250 Natura 2000 sites in Denmark – they are relatively small – owned by land owners, or small plots owned by different land owners (30-40 owners). Many are semi-natural habitats with main threat the lack of grazing and/or inappropriate grazing.

The lesson learned from this project is that it is important to start a dialogue between land owners, farmers, municipalities and advisors. It should be acknowledged that it will be a long project in order to find the right solution. These people should work in close cooperation and project management is necessary to prevent minimum disadvantage since landowners can have different interests.

EEB: In reality we should be looking at the agro-ecosystem from a broader perspective – the actions and input and how it interacts with the overall system.

IFOAM EU: There is a number of examples of organic farming systems and agro-ecological practices to biodiversity management. Some examples are available in our brochure [Organic farming and biodiversity in Europe: Examples from the Polar Circle to Mediterranean Regions](#). Overall successful

biodiversity measures need to be attractive for stakeholders by being capable of meeting environmental objectives; based on sustainable livelihoods; being practically possible to apply; understandable in terms of the intervention logic; covering costs incurred and income forgone.

EURAF: In South-West of France there is a project based on the premise that the key is carbon – no life without carbon. The problem of bee health for example is a consequence of intensive agriculture we practice and highlights the need to diversify the systems. We need to reduce the need for pesticides. The idea is to work on a systematic scale. Agroforestry seeks to incorporate conservation measures.

EEB: Strong focus should be on functional biodiversity used to enhance agroecosystem services. A lot of [research](#) done the by the Institute of Organic Agriculture – FIBL. Biodiversity is needed in organic farming systems because it is much more limited scope for direct interventions, but these practices are also relevant for conventional farming. We also need to understand the contribution of insects and plants to food for pollinators. It shows that you can reduce pests – white cabbage butterfly 50-60%. Scarce research on functional biodiversity.

COPA: Need to remember the limitations of incentives for farmers to be paid for biodiversity measures under World Trade Organisation rules.

Commission: The concept of successful biodiversity implementation is very wide. There is a need for an approach that involves all stakeholders. In order to have successful biodiversity measures, collaboration within the community is needed to help design better measures. Need to make it more attractive, and design better measures at national and EU level. This should be based on cooperation and collaboration to support win-win measures. There is a need to look at the agro ecosystem level and important to take into account productivity and quality aspects as well as nutrition and diet patterns.

a) Short informative presentation from DG AGRI on the state of play of the minimum spending obligation for the environment and climate and on successful biodiversity initiatives (30%)

The Commission said that biodiversity is not only what is on the ground but also in the ground. The soil biota is a very important part of the biodiversity in general as it supports what is on the ground. It is important for good health of soils and agricultural productivity. In addition the Commission presented some successful examples of biodiversity protection stemming from RDPs which have to added, along soil biodiversity to the present discussion on that issue.

The Commission gave a presentation on current state of art on the implementation of the CAP (see PPT presentation).

IFOAM EU: Is it possible to provide a more detailed overview of the quality and level of ambition within the measures?

BirdLife Europe: added that it would be useful to see the quality and level of ambition in comparison with the previous RDPs for the 2007-2013 period.

Commission: Assessment of the quality of measures will be available at a later stage including details of the content of the measures. A rigorous assessment will occur during the evaluation phase. An overview of quality and ambition is currently not available in written form. We can still not say that

things are closed and decided and some time needs to be given for evaluation. We have targets and indicators and information that will arrive later. The initial assessment will start with annual reports.

The Commission is interested to see more concrete information on quality during the programming period. This includes the evaluation of the environmental impact. Measures also need to be seen in the context of CAP Pillar 1 implementation. Here we start to make some preliminary analysis.

Birdlife Europe: How is the Commission investigating where money allocated to environment is misused? For example, in Poland there have been sudden cuts in environmental payments resulting from “lack of funding”. However, a year later, 150 million euro was found and allocated to payments for least favour areas (LFA), but not based on any analysis or intervention. The issue has been addressed directly to the Commission by 17 Polish civil society organisations.

Commission: Member States are free to move money once they ensure that the minimum money is allocated and they have stuck to the objectives. In many cases, there is a time during the programming period where authorities could already demonstrate that objectives have been achieved.

COPA: Payment uncertainty is a big problem for building trust between farmers and authorities. In Finland, there is a problem that the allocated funds have dried-up because authorities underestimate the interest of farmers to take measures.

Commission: There are limited resources under RDPs and it is possible for Member States to move money to different measures under the programme once this does not affect the overall objectives and selection criteria.

IFOAM EU: There remains a problem in many Member States where organic farmers are unable to take up agri-environment-climate schemes beyond the scope of commitments related to organic production as so called “on-top” payments. This is despite the fact that the combination of organic farming with additional agri-environment interventions is both cost-effective and an added-value for environmental delivery. Although Commission guidance clearly states that RDP measures can be combined and payments accumulated, Member States appear to consider on-top to be double funding. Is the Commission addressing this on-going issue with Member State authorities to support better delivery of RDP objectives?

Commission: These aspects are outlined in the Organic farming – measure fiche and quite a lot has been done to clarify this point with Member States. Commission is happy to highlight this to Member State authorities at the next Rural Development Committee between the Commission and Member States.

EEB: Is there an overview of grassland payments supported under new agri-environment-climate schemes?

COPA: Trust is really important in the implementation of agri-environment measures and authorities really need to take this into consideration. Often the objectives may change after a farmer signs up to 5-10 year contract e.g. the goal posts change or additional record keeping is needed. Farmers get quite frustrated when changes are not kept to minimum. Biodiversity is a long time commitment and programming should also follow suit.

Commission: Importance to remember that there can be changes to the legal framework and as a result commitments may have to change, but beneficiaries can withdraw – this is a possibility.

Changes are there to improve the environmental outcomes and it remains in the competency of national agencies.

EURAF: 7.6% of total environmental spending is allocated to focus area 5d in order to reach targets for reducing greenhouse (GHG) and ammonia emissions. Does this also include nitrates?

Commission: For GHG reduction, Member states have to demonstrate the scale of the intervention and how it can contribute to reduction based on specific measures rather than focus areas. Measures are not limited to limited to nitrate vulnerable zones (NVZs).