

Final Minutes

Civil Dialogue Group Environment and Climate Change

10 November 2016

L30 – 11th Floor Room A

1) Approval of the minutes and the agenda of the meeting of the 8/6/2016 and of the resolution as well as the presentation on the Climate resolution first ideas

The Chair: We will start by adopting the minutes from the 8th June. Any comments? If not, then the draft minutes from the 8th June are adopted.

The Chair: Initial round table discussion on the 8th June on the matter. The document is the outcome of those discussions. It was difficult to reach a compromise but we did succeed, the document is balanced. The communication was very fruitful between the parties. We want to adopt the document unanimously today. You had the opportunity to write in for your comments. We have not received any major objections to make it impossible to adopt it.

Bee Life: The document makes no mention of pollinators. This is a short coming as they play a big part in agriculture. Through ecological intensification we can increase yields thanks to pollinators. If we do not add a mention of pollinators we will not vote for the resolution.

EFNCP: Some part of the procedure does not work so well. The difficulties for me in understanding the purpose of the resolution. What is the objective? And how it will contribute to certain things?

The Chair: We decided to talk about a different topic at each meeting and come up with an outcome that we can present to the European Commission (EC). The goal of the position is an advisory statement sent to the EC.

COGECA: There are many things we could have added to the resolution. The basis of what is in the resolution is what the discussion was in the last meeting. We also wanted a short resolution so it does not include everything.

ECVC: We are happy with the document. We've been following the process but we haven't had the resources to feed into it. Under the first chapter, the word 'voluntary' is not acceptable. We'd like to take that word out so that we better reflect what most farmers try to do.

The Chair: The word 'voluntary' refers to the second pillar of the CAP. Perhaps we could put that in the footnote?

EFFAT: I looked at the same sentences, if we said perhaps 'in particular' that might help for the listing. We don't want it to be seen as an exhaustive list. We don't want to rule out other interests that we haven't thought of.

The Chair: Any further requests? No. We will put in the words 'in particular'. Are you happy with that suggestion ECVC?

ECVC: Yes ok. My comment is linked to the word on its own. I'm not calling into the question the entire text. We're happy with the entirety of the text, except 'voluntary'.

COGECA: Yes good.

Birdlife: Could we please make the changes on the text on the screen so that everyone can see?

COGECA: Is that really necessary? We are talking about 'voluntary' in the first paragraph. If we put 'in particular' in front of voluntary and in addition put a footnote to recognize the opinion of ECVC. Bee Life also expressed that they cannot vote in favour so we will also put that in the footnote.

Birdlife: We have to adopt the point of Bee Life or we don't have a resolution at all because it will not be on behalf of the Civil Dialogue Group. Let's go the extra mile to include the point from Bee Life and we can all agree.

The Chair: In that case I would suggest we rework the text over lunch and we can integrate Bee Life's point and discuss again the new substance of the position.

COPA: I agree to put the sentence in concerning bees. But it's the procedure. Some people have been working on this document for a while and people can veto the document at the meeting that is not a good idea. I would urge everybody to use the time between the meetings to be active so we don't have to have these discussions in the meeting.

EURAF: Having read in a fast way now, from our point of view it has a general concern, it's too focused on Pillar II. It should clearly be linked to Pillar I and fulfil cross compliance. I would like to be part of the meeting at lunch to put in a comment.

The Chair: Could I ask you again to show us the text on the screen. What we should not do is open up a brand new discussion at this stage. The world pollinators can be put into the text. After the words 'wildlife habitats' put in the word 'pollinator' and before voluntary all. And that gives us the opportunity to adopt the paper unanimously.

EEB: We could say 'beneficial fauna' instead of 'pollinators' as they will be included but not singled out.

COGECA: I don't accept that we are talking about more points now as everyone had time to send the comments in.

Birdlife: Please put them in track changes.

The Chair: We'll make the small changes to the text and come back to you after the lunch break so you can see it and hopefully we won't need any further discussion of it.

2) Election of the new Chairmanship

DG AGRI: I now please invite all members to introduce themselves who are running for the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship.

CEJA: My name is Jannes Maes I am a Flemish dairy farmer, and I have been a Vice President of CEJA since September last year. I have a personal interest in the topic of environment and climate change in agriculture and I hope I can use this in my position as the Chair of the Civil Dialogue Group.

COPA-COGECA: I'm from Austria and I work within the Chamber of Agriculture and work in climate protection and would like to continue myself.

EEB: [Representative on behalf of EEB expert] She would be very interested to be the Vice Chair, before she worked in DG AGRI, and she is very devoted to agriculture and environmental issues. She is on maternity leave at the moment.

DG AGRI: Which procedure would you like to use: the secret ballot or raise your hands? We will raise our hands. If you are in favour of Mr. Maes please raise your hand. If you are not in favour please raise your hand. Any abstentions?

COGECA: COPA and COGECA would like to raise your attention and express our highest concern for the elections procedure. The deadline for the submission of candidates was the 24th October. And the 31st October we were informed of the candidates on the 4th November 10 days after the deadline the members were informed about an additional candidature by the EC. This could lead to this case becoming a precedent.

EEB: Mrs. Bas-Defossez was giving birth at the time of the deadline and she is asking for your understanding, we are not asking that this becomes standard procedure.

COGECA: As long as it is not repeated.

DG AGRI: In this situation we took account of her particular case, but she did say that if you did not agree with this procedure she would withdraw. If you do not agree we can strike her from the list. Shall we accept her, shall we proceed? Yes.

If you are in favour of Mme. Faustine Bas-Defossez please raise your hand. If you are not in favour please raise your hand. Any abstentions?

If you are in favour of M. Martin Langauer please raise your hand. If you are not in favour please raise your hand. Abstentions?

The elections of President and Vice-President have now been officially accepted. I would like to invite Mr. Maes to Chair the meeting now.

1) Update on the climate package – ESR and LULUCF (with participation of the rapporteur and discussion)

DG AGRI: There will be a hearing in January next year and the report will be drawn up on the 17th February, in March amendments will be taken and the Committee will approve it in April and in Plenary in June next year. The EC proposal is a success and balances the interests of each group depending on their ambition level.

The Chair: As this was already presented we shall keep this as short as possible.

DG AGRI: The Paris Agreement entered into force to keep temperate change below two degrees, and harness the potential of land use in the longer term and it acknowledges the importance of food security. The bottom up approach is a different way of addressing agriculture. The EU is not alone in proposing action related to land, we should act internationally in this way. The ETS -43 per cent target, Non-ETS – 30 per cent. Till now in EU policy CH4 and N2O included in the ESR, but LULUCF CO2. From the

impact assessment there were three key problems. LULUCF governance post Kyoto Protocol is absent, existing measures are not sufficient to reach -30 per cent and account for biomass emissions. This package tries to address simplification and new governance and keep the policy framework robust.

The proposal brings the CO₂ commitment for this sector into the EU climate and energy framework for the first time – addressed to Member States, stand-alone pillar and no debit rule. Need to address forest management reference levels, afforestation, cropland/grassland improve management and reducing administrative burden. Flexibilities, the commitment is a bundle of the five land accounting categories. Aggregated together Member State appliance to LULUCF debit commitment. Surplus account removals may be transferred to another Member State.

To summarize we've gone through the impact assessments, there has been a quantitative assessment of the impacts of agriculture LULUCF, the policy pillar proposed continues with no debit commitment, the flexibility within LULUCF and between LULUCF and ETS. Standardize and simplify reporting. Incentives for additional mitigation. In line with the EU's commitments made in Paris and recently ratified.

The Chair: We will now go to comments.

COPA: We should focus on decreasing GHGs globally. We should focus on food security, the goals for the non-ETS are very ambitious and we welcome the EC's proposal on flexibility however the use of flexibility measure are not without cost, we must do our utmost to ensure that the flexibility frames are sufficient as well as to ensure the specific flexible systems are set up so the costs are minimized for the agriculture sector. We must do our utmost to ensure our production is flat out in the EU for negative consequences for agriculture and for environment and climate. We must also ensure that production in the EU is not pushed around from areas with low emissions to areas with higher emissions.

IFOAM: The agricultural sector has to be part of reducing GHGs and a solution. Mitigation should not be addressed in isolation, they should all be addressed together. We welcome that fact that certain flexibility is needed and welcome the fact that it allows CO₂ but incentivize the land sector in the EU for carbon sequestration. But the flexibility is too high, we do not have the same ambition. If we reduce emissions we should have a long term road map. More ambition is needed on the side of farmers, solutions are there. There is a lot of money already available for this in the CAP. 30 billion EUR available for action on environment and climate change. They are not necessarily taken up by farmers though. There should be more ambition for the agriculture sector in general.

Birdlife: Having a global deal on climate change is essential. We should take it very seriously and implement the Paris deal in the EU in the strictest way and we should show that we are doing our bit – looking at real emission reduction in all sectors. Many sectors have already started to take this seriously. The longer we delay putting it into place, the harder it will hit in a couple of years. We want to stress our concern talking between LULUCF and effort sharing and the risks the flexibility could bring to it. We would like to see the EP and EC to consider if they are in our interest.

ECVC: Many farmers are forgotten in this system who are outside intensive farming. We are happy CFCs are being reduced by the EC. The EC should work with all sectors though. The EC is in favour of CETA but this will mean free trade and this will promote highly productive systems that produce a lot of CFCs. LULUCF is vital and something we would like to see applied and thought of by the EC when it is calculated is the agricultural fuels. It said these produced more CFCs than fossil fuels. That is the way the land is used for other purposes. We hope this will be taken into account in future for future regulations.

COPA: This is a very important topic, negotiations are under way. Let's remember the Paris Agreement which sets out a particular role for agriculture and they must not jeopardize food production. But agriculture must make a contribution to bring emissions down, the question is what route we should take to do this. As we see it we should make food with as low as possible GHG emissions. The level of GHG produced per unit of measurement is the point. Second point, agriculture and forestry have a role to play to bring emissions down and it's great that the EC recognizes this ability. The calculation method used, the proportion of agriculture as part of overall emissions as a benchmark that for Germany is 0.5 per cent but the benchmark should be the potential not the proportion. How big a contribution can agriculture make to bring emissions down this is the point. We would like to discuss to change it.

COGECA: The climate package for 2030 is very controversial and very complex technically. As a sector, please consult us as we are very affected by this. I am astonished because it is a mish mash of a fossil and biogenic CO₂. We could have gone in that direction to calculate but we have distanced ourselves from that route I suggest that this proposal takes us away from sustainability, here there is an emphasis on carbon capture and storage. We've already flagged there is a contradiction, making greater uses of renewable energy and storing CO₂ at the same time. This is contradictory. From an agricultural perspective the flexibility mechanism of having flexible change of certificates amongst MS etc. we shouldn't squander the opportunity and make full use of it. Critical of LULUCF approach, a threefold approach for different calculations systems. I have a question, could we unify these three systems? Taking the deforestation and reforestation model, rather than making artificial calculation basis? Why don't we make it more uniform can the EC explain that to me? Perhaps we don't have time to talk about more issues. Agricultural is one sector over the last 20 years we have brought GHGs down. At an EU level we have reduced our emissions by -24 per cent. Reductions can't be limitless in the future. We can be more efficient to a limited extent. In EU for efficiency we are doing very well. In production units we are in the first position. High levels of efficiency have been reached in lots of sectors. There is not substantial potential though to reduce GHGs further.

EFA: There is a role of agricultural for land which is classified as forest. Increasing the use of farmland not necessary for cultivation for carbon sequestration. We are delighted to see carbon as an option for the agricultural community to act against its emissions. The national framework for emissions reporting and accounting in DG Clima. Farmers need clearer advice for their land about what they themselves need to do to reduce their emissions. DG Clima can help. I see in the regulation comments that countries are recommended to approach three accounting, calculation made on each field, but there is nothing further than this. The EU is being very good but can we have more of a commitment that we will be using approach three accounting and tier three? And that individual farmers have access to the data?

Slow Food: The Paris Agreement to food security is one of the priorities. It does not need to intensify food systems now, but turn our attention to the best practices used now.

WWF: You have to consider between Member States we don't want the wrong incentive that they are a cash source and have no real commitment on climate.

EFFAT: What are the impact of these policies on employment? We need to create jobs? All the CO₂ storage are employment intensive, the methods bringing CO₂ and protection jobs could create 2 million jobs. This is a really important point. It sustains the work of farmers themselves as well.

Birdlife: The Paris Agreement set ambitious long term targets and it will be important for food security. If we care about global food security we should care about stopping climate change. The project says the share in 2050 is a 50 per cent reduction in CO2 emissions, the long term direction is a substantial decline in CO2 emissions. It's about how we get there. Efficiency is not a solution. There needs to be absolute targets. With regards to current effective targets set by the ESR proposal – there is definitely room for more ambition there.

Food Drink Europe: With reference to the Paris Agreement, where accounting of LULUCF will need to be performed at international level, we would need to see a level playing field of agriculture and food production inside and outside Europe. Will there be a level playing field of agriculture and food production outside Europe as well? We want to avoid imports that don't comply with this. This is a lesson we have learnt from the revision of the Emissions Trading System which is currently being discussed at the EU Parliament, and while Europe has ETS, several countries outside Europe including Brazil do not have such a system. Therefore we would be interested in knowing how the Commission will ensure this level-playing field for accounting of LULUCF emissions at international level.

COPA: You hear from many sides on many issues. It is a challenging role that you have in the EP and with the changes in the US your role is crucial. The direction is for 2050 not for 2030. Please give space to all opinions and ensure a trajectory that looks upwards, our reduction path looks upwards. It is the longer term that we should be looking at, it is important to allow for adequate flexibilities and recognition of what has been already achieved, and the limits of the natural processes that we agriculture works with.

MEP: Thank you for all of your comments. We will endeavor to feed as much of this as we can to this process. We have to confer between colleagues in the European Parliament to balance out these issues. I grew up in agriculture and worked in an agricultural Ministry and am interested in these matters and I don't want agriculture and forestry to be overlooked and that's why to issues of competency I speak out. I'm a full member of the Environment Committee and deputy member of the COMAGRI and I try to balance these out. I don't want to make the mistake of saying anything more now, it's too early. I'm grateful for your input. It's possible to have bilateral meetings. We will take note of all your comments. Thank you for inviting me to attend and I look forward to working with you in future.

The Chair: Thank you and we will now pass to Mr. Kay to answer your questions.

DG AGRI: I think COPA referred to the distribution of the share between Member States, this is adjusted to take into account the proportion of the share of the agriculture non-share emissions and to then assign on the basis of importance of each Member State a share of those emissions with respect to reductions. Read the ESR and LULUCF impact assessments.

Why three rules? If we did that we would see that some Member States would be fortuitous by the nature of the size of their country of the size of the emissions or removals. The purpose of their rules is to try to create a level playing field between parties internationally and within the EU – it would create strong divisions between Member States. Aligned with instructions from the Council to base yourself on the basis of the Kyoto Protocol rules. The efficiency of the EU agriculture – we're well aware of the benefits of remaining and avoiding leakage outside the EU and there is carbon advantage of maintaining efficient carbon reduction in the policy structure that we put together. For the approach three data and tier three accounting, the proposal requests that Member States use spatially explicit data (approach three) – the data sets should be used nationally. Tier three is the modelling approach recommended by

IPCCC it's not universally applicable. Mitigation does lead to job opportunity – but please share your study. We looked at the international applicability and therefore we saw that Member States could address that where they see fit – only the UK has committed under the second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol.

It's very bottom up the Paris Agreement so the level playing field might have a few bumps, but at least we have an agreement that remains active and at an international level. We are on track though to get all parties to make the right changes.

The Chair: Any more questions?

CEPM: I want to put the question to make a statement of reoccupation of our sector by the potential negative effects of these international agreements. We agree as corn producers in reducing the amount of emissions, we are in front of technological implements to reduce these emissions. But we have some special fear of international agreements, especially the Paris Agreement implementation. International trade has a lot of problems, these climate tools may be converted into trade tools and if economic space like the EU respects the agreement and another bloc doesn't respect it there is a big problem. We have these problems now with trade agreements to improve the trade around the world. The production of maize is during these last two years very affected by the implementation of trade agreements that are being very well respected and not in another economic space in the world, namely Ukraine where maize is as a result more competitive. This is also an ecological problem. This is a recommendation we are at the forefront of technology but we have to protect our interests and if other parts of the other world don't accomplish their responsibilities this is a problem.

COGECA: As agricultural has a great potential to reduce GHGs and CO₂, why do we have limited capability to use the carbon tools? Why isn't recognition of credits from forest management in the proposal? They could contribute in our sectors and mitigate and remove emissions and we would like to see better recognition and not a limited way to use the carbon tool for our sectors. Why is it so low? It is not fair that we limit the recognition of forest mitigation, based upon the contribution of agricultural emissions to the ESR. The Commission's proposal is unbalanced as it does not consider the opportunities for agriculture and forestry to contribute to their potential. Just because we should have flexibilities in the agriculture we should not destroy our forest sectors.

EFFAT: Is it the EC's advice to Member States that when they see the grants that he should have also visibility of the estimates of the total emissions of his farm. Is it open data to the farmer? The land parcel identification system is only for agricultural land. Is there some advice to improve the integration of the data available on farmland, but also on forest holdings in the EU?

DG AGRI: In this proposal we are acting on Council requests from 2014 to respect -40 per cent ambition that was taken to the Paris Agreement discussion. The details are fundamental but will be addressed by other measures not LULUCF. Why so much and why is it limited? If we look at the overall figure of the reduction expected in our modelling or needed it represented 2/3 of a 20 per cent reduction. It needs to be reflected. It seems a small number but you have to look at it through a cumulative approach, it's about the needed reduction. 40-60 million tonnes to agricultural land action could be taken, that means it's reasonable to expect that it could come from LULUCF without threatening it. On data availability we don't go down to that detail. We see the opportunities created and to have Member States build systems, if a Member State decides to provide information at farm level it could be a positive way

forward. It's too early to say if it's the best approach but I reiterate it doesn't take individual farmers it's a tool to encourage policy to mitigate emissions in agriculture forestry sectors.

COPA: We are in favour of sustainable agriculture. We are working in a world context and want to protect agriculture in all its diverse forms. We could look at the emissions in this context. Agriculture should trap more carbon in the future and it's important to be flexible, but we should think how we should reward farmers.

EEB: Why a fully net system wouldn't be better? Also on Article 12 if they're found to be non-compliant what would happen?

DG AGRI: On forest reference levels it's a clear example of where there would be clear diversions between Member States. The way the EU policy works is not at a continental level it's at Member State level. It would result in strong divergences, we got this feedback from the stakeholder consultation. Article 12 in LULUCF proposal relates to the registry, how would compliance between ESR and LULUCF? It's in Article 9 of ESR, if a Member State has not taken into account to ensure no debit commitment this would be carried out to ensure compliance and transfers made and the compliance for the ESR. A Member State has a debit in LULUCF, the EC would move allocations from ESR to make sure that ESR would comply.

EEB: In the ESR you would have annual emissions removed as a penalty but it would be after the period, so would they have to buy them on the market? As it would happen in 2032?

DG AGRI: The temporal scope of the legislation is until the year plus one after, so spring of 2032 so the timing of that compliance cycle is in 2032 so this is a non-argument. The scope of regulation for compliance is for the reporting period.

COGECA: On land use in the climate systems, one argument is a lack of certainty, it's difficult to get clear figures on carbon capture and storage. Sustainable forest management policy is not used so there's potential that's it's not going to be tapped into, it's not clear why you're not making that distinction between biogenic and fossil emissions. Biogenic removal should be debited against agriculture, and not against transport. Also, in setting the reference value it's set by the EC. This should not be the case. You said also that there are different systems because there are disparities across the Member States. It would make sense to say that the Member States make these decisions as there are disparities. You can't use Kyoto as it expires in 2020.

DG AGRI: Uncertainty of sectors is a tricky subject. We are working with Member States to enhance systems. Removing reference period to 2005-2007 is to tackle accuracy. Why not forest management? I'm not sure that we have a homogenous forest management across Europe but I would like to point to Annex 5 of the agreement, without harmonized approaches there is a need for better transparency of systems.

We need to have a common framework to get us to an agreed stance on how Forest Reference Levels are done. We need stable accounting rules. Also, the agriculture forestry and use pillar. For the Kyoto Protocol it finishes at 2020 and there is no overlap.

COPA: We have to focus on research and I would urge you to contact DG Research for a good idea that can help us in the future. I would have focused on plant breeding and animal breeding. Development of

nitrous oxide mitigation measures related to agricultural production systems, feed additives, and sustainable intensification.

IFOAM: It's difficult to measure all categories, how are these difficulties taken into account in the LULUCF proposal? We cannot reply on efficiency, you are blind to side effects if you take into account only efficiency you don't see biodiversity, employment. The overall impact matters on the planet as well.

COGECA: The language does not allow for common ground. If we don't see that productivity and keeping farmers in their place is essential we are missing this opportunity. The only thing they are obliged to do is to make ends meet. Successful examples of mainstreaming of climate actions in the agriculture sector show that income is a major influence of those decisions, but also that positive side effects for the climate and the environment are just the same present. We should base our logic there.

EEB: I just meant that climate policy will have to do more driving on where the emissions must go. And I agree with research as well. The current proposal to forestry levels is an improvement. In the energy sector bioenergy is zero rated, so what is important is that they are accounted for in the LULUCF framework.

COGECA: An increase in production is not compatible with protecting the environment, we need to continue with research.

ECVC: Majority of our members are not benefitted by the CAP. There is a lack of awareness of what is happening in farming. I'm a bit concerned about that in this discussion about the confrontation of showing conventional farming, organic farming and family farming. The forests in the south of Europe, the wood is used for energy purposes and if we calculate the emissions those power stations are going to be able to offset a reduction in GHGs and we think that's acceptable.

DG AGRI: I will try to close off the questions now. I hope DG AGRI will be able to absorb your comments. Biomass not being carbon neutral is a complicated discussion. We are trying to take account of the proper accounting of biomass with respect to the production systems that are utilized. We are in favour of research, we have the Life Plus programme, more innovative ideas where several studies are presented. We have to take note of the priorities. Soil, carbon, it's important to include it in LULUCF. We are working with Member States to improve systems and use research projects, and best practices. The need for innovation and side effects. What happens when action is taken – this is incentives. Flexibility drives innovative approaches and responses, we have macro level to address innovation to give us solutions. We evaluated different measures about improving mitigation in LULUCF.

COGECA: In Finland in our forests we have delivered 300 million tonnes of CO2 balance. It's not free lunch it's invested and now it is not recognized. The new crops will also take in the CO2.

2) Update of the fertilizers regulation proposal – discussion

The Chair: We will now move on to this point on updating the climate package.

DG AGRI: Why this proposal? It is part of the package of the circular economy to recycle fertilizer material. We need to recover and use nutrients from organic materials, which are abundant, and to create an organic market for fertilizer for the first time.

The vision, safety, promote recycling of nutrients and boost the market for secondary raw materials. The structure of the fertilizer proposal. First the EC proceeded with partial harmonization of the system because we don't want to harmonize all the market with the label of EU but let Member States develop it at a national level new products and to allow new products before they become EU products and to push innovation as well. We try to facilitate circulation of fertilizer in the EU market. For the components of organic and inorganic fertilizer they should be submitted to strict rules. The 7 product categories covering all plant nutrition needs – biostimulants are included. This product will be classified among biostimulants when an effect on agricultural crops is detected. In regards to environment performance and limits value. The limits for contaminants indicated in the proposal of Regulation are considered safety. There will also be limit value for heavy metals based on a scientific basis. One of the most discussed contaminants, cadmium, on the basis of the specific reports in 2002 and 2015 evolved from 20 to 80mg per kg P2O5 as non-accumulation effect in the soil, but cadmium can leach in groundwater and it is difficult to remove it in the European soils. Cadmium is dangerous for human health and for the environment. The European Commission proposed three progressive limit values in inorganic phosphate fertilisers; 60 mg in 2018, 40 mg in 2021, 20 mg per kg of P2O5 in 2030. Regards to adaptability of the regulation, the EC foresees to have a delegated act to allow the development to the evolution of technology. The current proposal was presented to the Council in May 2016 and to the European Parliament (EP) some weeks after. The work in the EP was distributed amongst three committees. IMCO, COMAGRI and ENVI. CEN is developing biodegradable plastic standards for bioplastics and the JRC the safety standards for Struvite, Bio-char and hashes use as fertilisers.. We have seen the possibility to develop guidance documents. This will probably start the activity in 2018.

COPA: This is an area where fertilizers have an input for agriculture and are expensive as well. Protection of the soil maintain soil function is an important subject for farmers. We support harmonization and including as many fertilizers as possible. But we have a critical attitude to transparency for example for nutrients availability. With the EC's proposal this transparency has been lost. From the feed sector, we know positive lists, we want positive list for the fertilizers that things can be contained in fertilizers. For quality we want positive lists not negative lists. For compound and mineral fertilizers we want to avoid, but it's possible to have innovation in these categories but we want to avoid a mix of positive good fertilizers and poor compost fertilizers which would mean that the end product wouldn't be of a high quality for farmers. Another point is cadmium, generally agriculture favours high quality requirements but they should have a scientific basis and see how cadmium threshold values are justified and substantiated. Also the remains of biogas is key for these facilities and see what incentives agricultural fertilizer or remains of organic products are used rather than anything else.

EURAF: Some of the categories seem to overlap? What other heavy metals will be included as well? What will the regulation go with? It's important that the soil is reducing the heavy metals, would it be proposed to have controls for heavy metals in soils in the future?

COPA: It has to remain compatible for the sustainability of farms, we're in favour of this draft regulation. We want to maintain the link with neighborhood markets of fertilizers in the Member States. We don't want to include purification distinctions, we've got national regulations to protect the soil. The issue of labelling we'll have to be careful how we proceed with that. An index for biodegradability. Cost should also be compatible with farming and monitoring of costs.

DG AGRI: The cost increase for farmers I can see are marginal as regards decadmiation of phosphate inorganic fertilizers. It is highly probable that with the competition among the source of fertilizer there will no increase of in costs. It's possible that some categories risk to overlap but the Commission will try to avoid this risk. The philosophy of the regulation has been to avoid to be too prescriptive. In fact compared to the current situation only safety limit value and minimum quality level are established for contaminants and nutrient content. Raw manure is not included in the regulation to avoid costs of labelling and analysis. In any case when transported from a Member State to another the animal by-products Regulation provide for safety controls.

EEB: Limiting amount of cadmium is very important – we agree with the proposal in this way.

EFFAT: You Indicated that it's an industry group, we want users to be included in this industry group from the very start so these rules are compatible with health and safety.

EFNCP: For circular economy package and fertilizers it is evident that agriculture is separated from crop and livestock farming. There are few incentives to integrate these systems. The question is the circular economy package assessing trying to correct this wrong trend in dissociating livestock from crop farming.

ECVC: Does the EC intend to include vegetable based concoctions that are still used today in organic and non-organic farming? So far the phytosanitary has been rushing to get their hands on this and there are regulations that they are now pesticides. Nettle mulch is now a pesticide.

COGECA: Do you label these plant availability? They need to know when the nutrients are going to be released.

DG AGRI: Biostimulants are new and innovative substances and we need to see with the Member States their classifications as biostimulants or pesticides. As regards the film protecting of granular fertilizers with biodegradable bioplastics the Commission thinks it is better than the current situation with non-biodegradable plastic for a slow delivering of nutrients. Biodegradable bioplastics are now completely biodegradable.

Afternoon session: focused discussion on soil

The Chair: Before we start I would like to thank you all for supporting me and the Vice-Chairs today. It is up to us to work together to counter the coming polarization in the environment sector as these are international themes worldwide.

As said this morning we have done two adjustments in red to the proposal of a draft resolution. Without further delay everyone please raise their hands if they are in favour of the document. If you are not in favour raise your hands. Abstentions? The proposal is now approved.

1) Presentation by members of the group of good soil management practices

COGECA: We need to take the most use of our seeds to produce food. We need to do more with less and decrease environmental footprint while increasing agricultural production for food security. Sustainable

intensification. Sustainable means social acceptability and economic profitability. For land use and intensification we need to plan very well how we are working on soils, it's about land use planning and optimizing our soils. When we know our yield biomass below and above ground we can calculate carbon sequestration by biomass. Farmers need to estimate the yield potential and the project tried to create a land use optimization tool measuring the yield and why the soil is not giving its best. With the results we hope policy developers can use this data. We need different scales and approaches. Together with farmers we try to assess yield gaps and why the soil is not performing and develop the criteria, it is an ongoing process. We try to develop spatial consideration of land use to recover. We find the weakest points to increase yields from parcels. Then we can influence land use change and efficiency. A lot is about climate adaptation.

So far we have learned drivers for farmers – land allocation, logistical advantages and diverse rotations in the future. Also we found there was a readiness to implement land use changes was dependent on farm size and that they gained understanding needs to be coupled with development of policy measures.

The Chair: We will go on with the presentations and gather the comments and remarks to have a clear image before we start discussing.

IFOAM: It's good that stakeholders are involved in the process, we hope this continues. We look at how farmers and researchers are working together. There is a lot of research but it is not reaching the field. OK-Net Arable – project. We look at the productivity gap between conventional and organic arable farming. The more experience the farmer has the smaller the yield gap difference is. For organic it increases the complexity of production because you can use less. We're working with researchers, farmer and advisors to improve production in arable farming.

We have farmer innovation groups so farmers can contribute to the selection of tools that are applied across five themes. Already established groups which meet frequently throughout the year, comprising five to fifty years with less or more experience. 206 farms in total with highly variable soil and climatic conditions with range of farm types and farm sizes. The five themes, the two related to soil management are quality and fertility and nutrition management of the soil itself. We are working with the farmers, advisors and researchers. We develop advisory materials and an online knowledge platform. Soil fertility is the top issue for eight groups. To give you an idea to see what we have developed so far this is an example of a video of visual soil assessment. The importance of farmer-led involvement in soil management. A combination of top-down and bottom-up approach and farmers need to be at the centre of these approaches. The farmers have the first experience of problems, the laboratory should not be separated from the field. Discussion groups are important for talking and acting and understand better the importance of soil management and how to improve it. The importance of supporting these developments with stakeholder investments. The website is Farmknowledge.org

EFNCP/WWF: Olive orchards cover some 2.6 million hectares in Spain, 14 per cent of UAA. Many have high soil loss rates notably in hilly areas. The main key benefits are establishment and partial conservation of seeded or spontaneous herbaceous cover. This is the main issue we need to address. This should be done at least in the inter-rows. You can introduce grass species with short cycle annuals so there is no competition with water. Also initiate restoration actions and passive restoration of hedges and natural vegetation in sensitive areas. Reintroducing organic matter into the soil from olive fruit residues and leftover branches, and rebuilding cultivation terraces. Also livestock in olive orchards through undergrowth management with grazing. It's not always possible because of the size of

properties, it usually happens in larger properties. This way you reduce water competition, and animal production. Olive trees have high fodder value of olive branches and spontaneous vegetation.

Slow Food: A project involving medium sized farmers who got together in 1996 and many producers saw it not profitable to breed a particular breed of meat. They developed a project which has an aspect on soil management. Soil is a complex living system. We are also looking at farming and food as a system – soil, farmer, crop farmer, feed farmer, animal farmer, animal, butcher, chef, and consumer. The project brings together all these actors. Slow Food Presidia (Presidium) project. They have been working on an equilibrium between animal, human and environmental welfare. All the producers commit to an environmental protocol and they have a minimum percentage of land that they produce the fodder on. The production protocol outlines how the fodder is grown and how the soil is managed. They are doing symbiotic farming and are working with mycorrhiza to strengthen the root structure of the plants. The plant is hardier and more resistant to pests and absorbs more nutrients from the soil and improves the structure of the soil. It is to work with and respect microbiology of the soil and plant. It's the soil that's feeds the plant that feeds the animal.

At the beginning of the year, the retailer agrees on the quantity and fixed price for the year. The retailer buys the whole animal and processes it and sells it. This means there is traceability and control of farmers over the whole value chain it results in higher returns for farmers of 30 per cent.

The farmers all have a practical motivation to do what they are doing. They have an incentive to do symbiotic farming. They are observing healthier animals and they have healthier meat and there is a lower carbon footprint. It is an experience that is replicable.

The Chair: Thank you very much for all the presentations and a good lead up to the discussion and comments that will come next. First question, you mentioned the scheme with livestock and you said the problem with using grassland to cover the soil it was extracting too much water, but if you put livestock on there the grass will keep on growing?

WWF: You do very intensive grazing and leave only a small amount of grass, it's enough to reduce it and that's enough.

The Chair: We'll start now with our questions.

ECVC: In my own farm I have olive trees we leave the grass and ask neighbours to have sheep that we can use to reduce the groundcover. Olive trees have a cycle that has to be maintained through rain or irrigation. My question is about erosion. Haven't we seen since CAP to make old olive to be purchased and then replaced with orchard trees very close together whether traditionally there was a larger distance between the trees as they're quite self-sufficient? Do you think the CAP has had a negative impact?

WWF: Yes there was a difficult period under CAP where olive production went up. But we will see irrigation in the future though but are not necessarily linked to the CAP – fertilizers, pesticides – intensification. Farmers are not confronted with how they are using the soil. You can still have vast olive production in these areas using these methods. Now we see dense planting with irrigation.

The Chair: There are also some questions on the timetable that we should follow. Please look at these.

COGECA: There has been some reference to better farming to better producing. Also on the competition to the way the trade-offs are being dealt on grasslands. We should talk about ways to remediate the trade-offs. This is the good way on the one hand and on the other hand we say there is a way to compensate the trade-offs that come naturally from the environment and they are applicable to everybody. This brings me to a way of seeing emissions that cannot be completely avoided because they are part of natural processes that cannot be substituted or completely controlled.

WWF: It's good that we have concrete discussions. You were talking about sustainable intensification. Are you looking at the time from which a more intensive approach changes the structure of the soil or stops changing the structure of the soil? How can we protect our soils?

COGECA: We are looking for soil structure. We try to maintain long-term experiments. We must touch the point of protecting our soils carefully. Soil reactions and the cycles of soils are dependent on weather conditions and climatic conditions. We cannot tell or impose changes to those natural processes by legislation. As farmers we know how to best treat our partner which is soil. We have to give a lot of room for farmers in this case.

Slow Food: The Chair said it's good to get tips from other farmers, we are trying to do this at Slow Food. It is something that should be encouraged. Also for the CAP, farmers are reporting that often the Rural Development funds are very project implemented meaning that each farmer is required to buy equipment to fulfil the funds and there is no encouragement for sharing of tools and in general there is no sharing attitude.

Birdlife: On the policy side for us it's great to see concrete example where people are working on good on soil management, but it was not possible in the current greening measure to have soil included. A measure of soil cover would have been appropriate and dealing with the problems that are at hand. It is undermining what is the sustainability of these crops and what is the rationale and justification to pay farmers to be green but there is no requirement for permanent crops. We should be looking at 2020 and we have asked to look at what the CAP is delivering and ask for a fitness check of the CAP. We can look at where best to look and what aspects to concentrate on.

COPA: In the Slow Food presentation it was underlined that soil is a complex living system. It is a system we should focus on. How to support further uptake of good practices. All farmers and farm owners are aware of the quality and value of the soil and the farmer would like to transfer the farm to the next generation in a better condition as when he received it. The farmer should have a great knowledge of soil and improvement of soil. There is need for new knowledge and focus on research in this area. In Denmark we have focused on the soil for several years but in fact we only know a little bit about the roots below the surface. We have in many regions and among farmers a lack of knowledge we should transfer the knowledge from the universities from research to the individual farmer. Here independent advisory systems are very important. We need more research, advisory, rural development measures, products that can show the farmers the way. We need dialogue between farmers and local NGOs at the kitchen tables. Let's show how we can improve the soil through good dialogue and not through more legislation and more administrative burdens.

EFFAT: Have you looked at your impact on employment from the projects? For environmental and social dumping we have always said public policy has led to a reduction in employment because environmental and social standards are lower elsewhere. All public policy should help to improve standards for the

environment and social standards as well. This requirement should be built into public policies, in trade agreements to neighbourhood arrangements. We suffer in terms of competitiveness. Soil erosion occurs at a greater rate in some places, but they want transfer of skills once we show that certain practices that have less impact are viable. The Minister for Agriculture in Ecuador explained that today they have organic coffee production because they had destroyed the soil through production so they had to change over to organic – it was a question of productivity. In certain cases these techniques are more advanced and suited to certain countries and we should use public policy to set higher levels.

COPA: These exchanges are very positive on good practices. Over the past few years it has gained such interest and traction amongst the farming community. There is a great interest from farmers on how to improve their soil. The answer to productivity may lie in the soil. They benchmark on soil organic matter content as well as productivity. We need more research to identify and answer unanswered questions and we need good knowledge exchange. Cover crops is an area that we could do more work on to identify the potential benefits that they can bring. Many farmers do cover cropping but maybe there is a knowledge gap in soil types and potential benefits. DEFRA has a sustainable intensification platform to identify and put some evidence behind cover crops and why they work and what the potential benefits are. We should share some of that with other people. That work has just started. But we need to look at a number of results of different periods. I'm puzzled by the comment from Birdlife on cover crops and greening. In England we have catch crops in the greening requirements.

Birdlife: No it was to have a stand-alone issue. We need a soil cover requirement as a stand-alone issue that would be looking at soil cover widely.

COGECA: There is an interest in farmers on how to use catch and cover crops to help their soils. There are limitations in the EFAs in timing of when they can use them. From our perspective we want flexibility that farmers can make more use of that EFA requirement and deliver more environmental benefits at the end of the day.

EURAF: How is it connected the climate office tool? The role of animals can close the nutrient cycling, this is important and we are able to deliver more products from the same unit of land. Making the farm system more resilient. There is not a real promotion of landscape features, we don't know if we can improve it through policies.

EURAF: You are all collecting data, how can it be better made available to European farmers in a systematic way and what about a land parcel identification system? Can we use that potential use as a two-way resource? They have to record their land use on their forms, can we put soil organic matter on their forms if they're doing interesting research?

COPA: It's been important to talk about sustainable intensification. Produce more with fewer inputs – this is the challenge. We have many different types of land in Europe with different methods used on them – the challenge is to find a method that works for organic and traditional farms. It's healthy soil that is produced using similar methods, advising holdings is the answer. I would like to pick up this idea from farmer to farmer. It should be the farms that are involved in it themselves. How can we put them in policies, greening and cross-compliance are examples that show that it's difficult or impossible to bring all of these good measures into one single agricultural policy throughout Europe. The only possibility when we talk about soil quality and management in policy is to hold discussions and provide approach that should be the corner stone of our approach.

ECVC: I've heard of things we heard five or six years ago when there was talk of productivity, how can we forget soil in the EU is becoming less fertile. In Champagne there is production on artificial soil there are wine growing areas where if we didn't use fertilizers there wouldn't be any grapes. In face of this long situation what can the EC think up so that farmers understand that they need to change the methods used? The Americans are happy to use tonnes of nitrates per hectare, we know the problem but has the EC become aware of the methods needed to address the problem of the soil?

COGECA: Soil brings us closer together. This is a vital issue for everyone. We shouldn't forget artificial soil and soil sealing. We need to limit this problem.

EEB: The cross compliance requirement in Spain it is to have cover of slopes of 10 degrees or more. The EC should have a stronger say of what is acceptable cross-compliance or not. On Slow Food, you said it was hard for farmers to stay in business, what is done on the ground for this? It was also said the boundaries of biodiversity loss have also been preceded, but you said it was for land use optimization and you said drainage, but this is not always the most suitable. Can you say more on this?

COGECA: I want to add to the discussion some points for the information available. It is available on a small scale but the problem is that we don't have enough soil scientists to go to the field. This leads the importance to have long term studies that go beyond the first 30 centimetres of soil, that go below the topsoil. Soil management is also important in the deeper soil and we want to promote it in a protective way. For what we have in terms of trees and landscape elements, it cannot show what it will make in 10 or 15 years. The findings are not black and white. We understand the importance of these measures in concrete elements e.g. soil and nutrient management plans and carbon auditing however these umbrella groups need flexibility in order to be able to find their implementation at a farm level. It is also linked to LULUCF. From my experience I see more and more in soil discussions that we talk about biodiversity issues and primary productivity and carbon sequestration and researchers say we cannot work in silos. This discussion has to be in a balanced way and [the Landmark project is a good example of all soil functions and their balanced interaction.](#)

EURAF: We can use big numbers and we can do a similar thing e.g. isolated trees represent this number of hectares but we are not able to see if they are under the payments of the CAP or not. We cannot see the real impact of the policies. This is a real problem from our point of view.

COGECA: There is already a first assessment of the [greening](#) where it is shown the uptake of measures, but regarding soil organic matter we won't see in two years we need more time. That is how it works. Nature reacts differently.

COPA: Just a brief answer to the EEB about erosion we want to point out that in the field of compliance there is a rule of avoiding erosion. In Germany the federal states have looked at all the areas and categories for the present erosion and that's gone so far that they haven't been able to provide answers to the farmers. I don't think it's entirely true that they are no regulations in this field.

COPA: We have a lot of rules in Denmark concerning erosion and build on requirements from the EU. It's a problem of dialogue between the Member States and the EU that hasn't been good enough. I would like to reflect on the ECVC comment. It's a pity that we are digging trenches between different cultivation systems, we should focus on what can improve the quality of the soil instead of discussing if we should be organic or intensive. Let's see what we can put on top of the cultivation systems so we improve the soil. That's the most important thing. If we want a better soil quality we should do more in

different areas: more knowledge, better information and advisory, better dialogue between the farmer and between the local NGOs. We want better soil and better biodiversity and production etc.

The Chair: If we see that the added value of farmers is their soil management it's about that gathering of information between farmers which can create a new way forward in the case of soil management. The example of small landscape elements, as a farmer I want to ensure a stable policy in place if I invest I won't be put against the wall and keep being obliged to do these things in the future.

WWF: In terms of employment it doesn't change that much. One of the unfortunate consequences of olive orchards excluded from greening is that they are also being excluded from any monitoring included in the greening. I'm happy to learn that there are good examples of cross-compliance elsewhere, but not in olive cultivation. Regarding small landscape elements, I agree that we have to show good incentives but in many cases part of areas of places where you can do that restoration are usually areas that are naturally less productive. There is a study showing the olive orchard what percentage of land is less productive is about 4-5 per cent which is about the same required for EFAs. We agree on farmers sharing knowledge. It's a matter of disincentives that are there at the moment of integrating livestock and crop agriculture.

The Chair: You said we forgot about the integration, but as a sector it doesn't mean we aren't cooperating.

IFOAM: It depends on the farm that you have and what practices you will apply but of course the importance of rotation is critical for an organic farm. It's about planning your whole rotation between five and seven years and ensuring you have the right nutrient availability. Farmer to farmer cooperation does come in quite easily and cooperate at a reasonable level. On the questions of increasing this information across Europe this is important and I'm pleasantly surprised at the feedback, especially importance of disseminating current knowledge and see if it will feed into a future resolution where we agree. Let's try to see where we can agree. In the future we need to try to tackle a bit where we don't agree. The carrot and the stick – how to incentivize and push as well. We should look at the whole alignment of soil and biodiversity – public goods that are important in farming. But farmers' function is also to produce private goods. Public goods elements are important but there are tradeoffs, that's why policy intervention is there. We need to have a better debate about aligning producing private goods in line with public goods. Public goods should be seen as the overall farm business, not just as an extra add-in. We need to incentives and reward farmers, they want to feel they have autonomy. Public policy has an opportunity to incentivize and reward farmers. Are direct payment really working?

The Chair: We certainly need a balance but sometimes the farmer cannot reach the carrot while being beaten by the stick.

COGECA: Thank you for comments. I'm sorry the website is not in English yet. I would like to share the concern, it's a pity that our farming in Europe is not competitive. We don't really want any more directives. We need to enhance their productivity and produce the food for ourselves. It is an investment, it's work and knowledge and commitment and it needs to be recognized. I'm sharing the concern of ECVC. In Finland we cannot feed our lands because of the water quality. 30 years ago we understood that there is leaching of nitrates and phosphates and since then we have improved. But now we are blamed as a pollutant of the seas. We are also blamed for climate change, but we are removing more CO2 than emitting but we are still being blamed. This kind of politics is not sustainable, we need to

rely on science. On drainage, it's about biodiversity, if we didn't have the possibility to drain our soils our soils would be dead. It would also cause erosion. There are times that we have water in our soils but we need drainage for specific soils to keep them alive. It's one example that we have different conditions across the EU and that we cannot have one directive for Europe.

Slow Food: On the impact on employment, we did a study on 50 of the projects assessing the sustainability – we looked at employment and revenue. The results were different for different products but there was always a positive impact. On permanent grasslands, I'm not sure, but I know that it involves farmers in the mountains and in the plains where they were previously doing conventional farming. On sharing information, the more the better. There was an EIP platform, I think there are still some hurdles to overcome, the language problem, how it works, bureaucracy already there. Is there a more a dynamic way such as physical meetings to exchange information. On replicability, we can share the studies we've done so far and it is something that is replicable. It started from conventional producers and slowing there was an evolution because of the collaboration. And of better dialogue, it's a good idea to meet and network. Two things, on the importance of research we stress that it's important to involve farmers from the beginning. They have a lot of knowledge already and because they are on the ground. But also debating on things that we don't agree on. We should discuss on systems that different models of agriculture are based on. We can then look in different directions. We shouldn't have a black and white approach about the food system.

The Chair: I agree about involving farmers from the beginning. Every farmer I know who has helped research is always willing to do that in future. The farmer needs to see the end added value. The more with less principle, it's not only good if we have to produce more. It's also producing with less.

COGECA: On the point of payments for ecological services, we have some system but they are initiated by water companies. Finding and buying for other services such as biodiversity services is more difficult. We want to see more discussion on this. There are lots of things farmers are doing voluntarily outside of cross-compliance. We try to monitor these voluntary actions, but it's quite difficult because it's not monitored. But we find it valuable to gather that data.

EURAF: Maybe it's a good idea to have a point for cross compliance and presence of landscape features?

IFOAM: These thematic questions have been good, could we continue this thematic discussion such as water and air? I've found these conversations quite useful and we have seen that we can agree on some parts. It's already a positive start. Could we continue this format in the afternoons?

WWF: We are exploring payment for ecosystem services, with different buyers. It's a problem of scaling these schemes from local areas to regions and have it regulated. We would like to share in this CDG experiences like the ones we have in the Danube Carpathian region.

COPA: We are working on this subject in France. But on more on the preservation of water and flooding and climate issues. This is an area where the exchange is useful.

The Chair: I take note of this, please forward any other points to the Secretary of the group and as Chairmanship we will discuss these.

DG ENVI: I am in charge of soil policy. On the 5th December there is a conference on soil protection and soil policy. We will have a full session on soil, agriculture and forestry. You are all invited to attend.

The Chair: If there are no more comments I would like to thank everyone for contributing and keeping a constructive dialogue open. I will now close the meeting.

Meeting closed 5:25pm.

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at Community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."