

## **Strategic Agenda of the environment and climate change CDG (2014-2020) – final version**

### **Introduction:**

2014-2020 will see a lot of EU policy developments and revisions that will impact farming, food processing, food manufacturing and food retailing and their potential for more sustainability. These developments areas are sweeping, and include a range of issues like soil, water, climate change, air quality and biodiversity. It will affect productivity and efficiency, including input management encompassing production and consumption. Parallel to this it will be the period of the implementation of the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that includes among its three overarching objectives the sustainable management of natural resources.

The new environment and climate change civil dialogue group (CDG) gathers experts from various interest groups (much broader than before under the 'environment and agriculture' advisory group) and in view of the great expertise it compiles, it is an important platform for the discussion of how policy can support the delivery of best practices for the sustainable management of natural resources farming depends upon as well as how policy can help adapt to and mitigate climate change, *secure jobs in rural areas and improve safety and health of workers in rural areas*.

Sustainable agricultural productivity – and indeed food security - is threatened by a changing climate and poor natural resources management. Likewise, agricultural practices that fail to make efficient use of natural resources threaten to exacerbate a natural resource and climate change situation that is already a cause for concern. This CDG presents an opportunity for a constructive dialogue between key stakeholders and for the development of advises that may have value for guiding EU policy.

In its function of advising body, it is important that issues discussed under this group are focused on real-world priorities, and where possible aligned with political agenda. It is also important that coherence is drawn between the various meetings and their outcomes.

### **Working methods:**

Before highlighting main priorities that relate to the working methods, it is important to recall the main/general tasks of the group, based on the Commission's decision (2013/767/EU):

- *Maintain a regular dialogue on all matters relating to the EU framework for environmental protection and climate action ;*
- *Exchange relevant experience and good practice;*
- *Advise the Commission on relevant policy;*
- *Deliver relevant opinions on request of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development or on their own initiative;*
- *Monitor relevant policy developments*

In the light of these tasks and in order to ensure the work under this group is conducted in the most efficient way and as regards the broad diversity of backgrounds of experts, the working methods of the meetings under this CDG must be focussed on:

- Receiving optimum and concise information from the Commission through presentations and discussions/ When relevant receiving concrete questions from the Commission on specific topics or policy developments prior to the meetings
- A good preparation of the meetings through the sending of relevant information within some acceptable deadline (presentations, a noted agenda, etc) from the Commission prior to the meeting
- A good preparation of the meetings through the listing and sending of questions from the group to the Commission prior to the meetings
- Maximising synergies to move forward together (if consensus can be drawn- some recommendations could be drafted on behalf of the group to the Commission)
- When and if necessary increasing the effectiveness of the meetings by breaking the big group into 'working groups' focusing on subjects of common interest
- Planning and structuring meetings in a way that they not only comprise Commission's interventions plus Q&A, but also time to collect and list contributions when appropriate in form of clear advices/suggestions (structure the debate)
- Including in the Minutes of each meeting, a clear and concise list of the advices/ concerns / suggestions/ criticisms provided by the experts for each topic/matter presented by the Commission, or tackled by the group (ex: as an Annex).

### **Relevant policies and objectives for the group:**

Keeping in mind all the other 12 CDGs and their focuses, overarching objectives that the group should be focusing on are:

- Securing long term food production capacity *and food quality* in the EU alongside protecting and enhancing the environment
- Sustainability of food consumption and production as well as production and consumption of energy, feed and fibre
- Productivity and resource efficiency
- Effectiveness and efficiency of environmental measures
- Adaptation to climate change (climate-resilient agriculture)
- Climate mitigation and emissions reduction
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and promotion of ecosystem services i.e. provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural services, provided through agricultural practices
- Promotion of existing measures and innovation in line with the EIP-AGRI to address challenges such as climate change, air pollution, protection of soil, water, biodiversity

**Non-exhaustive list of policies/ communications/initiatives** at EU level expected to affect these objectives in the coming years:

- Integration of environmental policies into CAP- **overarching**
- 7<sup>th</sup> environmental Action Plan

- *EU strategy for a non toxic environment (announced)*
- Water Framework Directive and Nitrates Directive
- Climate and energy package post 2020
- Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive
- EU 2020 Biodiversity strategy and implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive/ Fitness Check of the EU Nature Legislation (in-depth evaluation of the Birds and Habitats Directives)
- Green infrastructure strategy
- EU fertilizer regulation
- Innovation (EIP-AGRI)
- Air quality package
- Land as a resource communication (announced)
- Sustainable food system communication (put on hold)
- Sustainable Development Goals
- EU Forest Strategy and agroforestry
- Circular Economy Package/ Waste policies
- Bioeconomy strategy
- Regional development measures (including smart specialisation strategies) targeting environmental improvement
- The European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals  
*Framework Directive encouraging improvements in the safety and health of workers*

**List of specific topics that could be addressed within the 7 years period:**

These are the topics which the representatives of the CDG for environment and climate change, would like to discuss with the Commission (DG AGRI but also other DGs when relevant such DG ENVI, DG CLIMA, etc...) as well as external experts when relevant within the mandate. The order in which they will be addressed will depend on the political agenda over the years:

- Improvements in resource efficiency across the EU farming and production systems, *alternative supply chains (Potential political links: Roadmap for a resource efficient Europe, communication on Circular economy, implementation of CAP)*
- Reduction of Greenhouse Gas emissions in agricultural production (*Potential political links: 2030 framework for climate and energy policies, EIP – CAP Pillar 2*)
- Innovation for a resource efficient farming system, in view of sustainable /agro-ecological intensification (*Potential political links: Horizon 2020, implementation of the EIP – CAP Pillar 2, precision farming*)
- Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and improvements in *agricultural water management (2<sup>nd</sup> River Basin Management Plans)* Implementation of the Nitrates Directive (*potential political links: CAP, WFD*)
- Implementation of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive and other relevant developments related to pesticides (*potential political link: implementation of the SUD – Integrated Pest management (IPM) development*)
- Revision of the fertilizer regulation and opportunities and challenges for farming and other relevant developments related to fertilizers (*Potential political link: revision of the fertilizer regulation*)

- Implementation of the EU 2020 biodiversity strategy with focus on target 3 “agriculture” and Fitness Check Natura 2000 (*Potential political links: CAP, Rural Development measures (AECM, Natura 2000 measure, review of the green infrastructure strategy in 2017), TEEB, MAES process*)
- Inclusion of agriculture and in particular LULUCF in the climate and energy package post 2020, protection of wetlands and peatlands, role of agroforestry and forestry in mitigating climate change (*Potential political links: climate and energy package 2030, Effort sharing decision*)
- Role of bioenergy in the climate and energy package and its impacts on agriculture (*Potential political links: revision of the biofuels policy towards 2020, implementation of the ongoing RDP and support to bioenergy - publication of EC Communication*)
- Sustainable Livestock production in the EU (*potential political links: CAP, genetic resources in agriculture program, revision of the NEC directive, European Union Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Animals 2012-2015*)
- Improving the sustainability of European food systems including reduction of food waste at all levels of the food chain, and other relevant developments on methodologies to measure environmental performances like Product and Organisation Environmental Footprinting (OEF and PEF)(*Potential political links: Pending Communication on Building a European sustainable food system, PEF / OEF testing, High Level Forum on the Better functioning of the food supply chain, the Retail forum for sustainability, Food SCP RT*) .
- Air quality and role of EU agriculture (*potential political links: NEC revision/implementation – the potential contribution of the agriculture sectors (crop production, livestock, etc.), Rural Development (focus on measures on ammonia and methane)*)
- The COP 21