



Brussels, 22 May 2014

Conclusions of the meeting of the Member States jointly with the Advisory Group on Fruit and Vegetables and the School Fruit Scheme Experts Group

Brussels, 20 May 2014

The fifth meeting of the extended "Stakeholder's group" took place on 20 May 2014, bringing together representatives of Member States with the Advisory Group on Fruit and Vegetables and the Scientific Expert Group.

The agenda of the meeting focused on the implementation of the SFS, with a particular emphasis on the issues related to accompanying measures, controls, logistics and distribution.

The joint meeting has come to the following conclusions.

1. As regards the implementation of the SFVS, the joint meeting:

- Welcomes the significant improvements in the functioning of the Scheme and in particular the major improvements in the use of allocated funding. The uptake of funds in 2012/2013 stands at around 78% which is a major increase compared to previous years (64% in 2011/2012).
- Considers as an important encouragement that the Scheme's coverage has extended and that more than 8.6 million children benefited from it with 61.000 schools participating, which is an increase of 0.5 million children and of 6.000 schools compared to the previous school year.
- Takes note of the changes that CAP 2020 reform brought for the SFVS and welcomes that most of the legal provisions have been already put in place in order to enable these changes to be implemented as of 2014/2015 school year (new indicative allocations adopted, final allocations scheduled adoption for end June 2014, delegated act with the definition of accompanying measures and eligible costs). Further work on integrating accompanying measures to Regulation 288/2009 is in progress.

2. Concerning the implementation of the SFVS in Member States, the major part of the joint meeting was devoted to the presentations and discussion about the implementation of accompanying measures, controls and issues related to the distribution and logistics.

The joint meeting:

- Agrees on the crucial importance of accompanying measures, in particular their potential in bringing about a sustained increase in children's' consumption of F&V and improving their eating habits.
- Thanks the SFVS Group of Experts for their Guidelines for the implementation of the Scheme and also on accompanying measures.
- Acknowledges that there should be a balance between the need for: on the one hand, effective and controllable measures and on the other hand sufficient flexibility for MS to choose the approach that suits the best their educational settings.
- Welcomes the possibility for further guidance from AGRI services on the eligible operations and controls of accompanying measures in order to prevent/reduce possible error rates in the spending for these measures. Evaluation of these measures in terms of effectiveness/efficiency also requires further guidance.
- Stresses the importance of coordination among different stakeholders at public and private level and the necessity to include specific expertise in both the design and the implementation of the scheme.
- Takes note of the different experiences in MS when it comes to the implementation of the Scheme and that different approaches can be effective.
- Considers that simplification of the regime is the key for success as organisational and administrative burden is a disincentive for participation.
- Acknowledges the important role of parents to ensure continuity as well as of teachers.
- Welcomes the presentation of the school representative which provided a valuable insight into their first-hand experience in dealing with the SFVS.

3. The next meeting:

- The stakeholder group agreed that the next meeting should take place more or less at the same time next year which would allow taking stock of the situation and in particular give the first assessment of implementation based on the higher budget and accompanying measures, co-financed by the EU.