The meeting was suspended on the 30 September 1998 at 18.00 in order to allow the Member States to continue to assess the availability of seed of the varieties suitable to meet the shortage in Finland under item 2a of the agenda; it was then resumed on 2 October 1998 at 12.00.

Chairman: Mr. D. Obst (for items 2, 2a, 4 and 5)  
M. M. Valvassori (for the other items)

All Member States present.

The Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) and - for items 3, 6, 7 and 8 - Norway participated as observers.

1. **Usage over the past five years of forestry reproductive material marketed under less stringent requirements.**

The Committee welcomed a background working paper on the usage of forest reproductive material under less stringent requirements in respect of the last five years.

It suggested that for the future, the data should be split as far as possible according to the provenance.

2. **Draft Commission Decision authorising the Member States to permit temporarily the marketing of forest reproductive material not satisfying the requirements of Council Directive 66/404/EEC and 71/161/EEC.**

This decision would authorise for a limited period the marketing of forest reproductive material of certain plants meeting less stringent requirements, in order to overcome difficulties in supply experienced in several Member States.

Voting: Favourable opinion: 82 for and 5 abstentions.

2A) **Draft Commission Decision authorising the Member States to permit temporarily the marketing of seed on certain species not satisfying the requirements of Council Directive 66/402/EEC.**

This Decision would authorise for a limited period the marketing of seed of winter varieties of rye and wheat meeting less stringent requirements in order to overcome difficulties in supply experienced in Finland.

Voting: Favourable opinion: 73 for and 14 abstentions.
The Committee stressed the importance it attached to proper procedures in relation to requests for derogations. It understood Finland’s difficulties but was concerned about the short time available to consult industry and urged all Member States to avoid such problems in the future.

The Finnish Delegation informed the Committee that its country has difficulties also with seed of spring varieties of fodder, cereal and oil plants and that more information will be supplied as soon as it gets the evaluation from seed testing stations.

3. **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY COMPARATIVE TRIALS.**

The Committee took note of updated information on

a) The trials in progress in 1998. On the occasion the Committee supported the inclusion on the agenda of the item “Discussion on the simplification of the Council Directives on the marketing of seeds in respect of seed testing procedures” of the meeting of the Committee of experts on Community Comparative tests on seed which will take place from 7 to 9 October 1998 at Lyngby DK).

b) The trials 1998/99 to be initiated immediately (grasses, swede rape and electrophoresis).

c) The trials 1998/99 to be initiated before the end of this year (potato¹, garlic², maize, spring barley, sunflower and cotton). However, the carrying out of these trials is subject to the completion of further financial aspects.

Further more the Member States were invited to submit to the Commission services suggestions for the trials for which Community funds should be allocated in the financial year 1999.

4. **DRAFT COMMISSION DECISION SETTING OUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY COMPARATIVE TESTS OF SEED POTATOES UNDER COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 66/403/EEC.**

This Decision provides for the carrying out in 1998/99 Community comparative tests on seed potatoes marketed in the European Union, in order to ensure that proper conclusions on their compliance with the Community requirements may be drawn therefrom.

Voting: Favourable opinion: 77 for and 10 abstentions.

Before voting on the above, the Committee, without prejudice to the reservations relating to the decision, approved the protocol which specifies the technical conditions under which the tests should be carried out, including the programme for sampling.

¹ See also item 4 below.
² See also item 5 below

This decision provides for the carrying out in 1998/99 of comparative trials and tests of propagating material of garlic marketed in the European Union in order to ensure that proper conclusions on their compliance with the Community requirements may be drawn therefrom.

Voting: Favourable opinion: 77 for and 10 abstentions.

Before voting on the above, the Committee, without prejudice to the reservations relating to the decision, approved the protocol which specifies the technical conditions under which the trials and tests should be carried out.

6. **Accelerated Inscription of Additional Varieties of Agricultural Plant Species on to the Common Catalogue (Varieties Notified Since 24 July 1998).**

The Committee noted a Commission working paper listing 39 varieties notified by the Member States since 24 July 1998 and considered by the Commission as eligible for listing in the Common Catalogue.

However the list did not include twelve varieties of maize because according to the Commission services such an inscription in the country of admission was not considered in conformity with the provisions of Council Directive 70/457/EEC on the Common Catalogue of varieties of agricultural plant species.

As a point of information the Member States were asked if the list of the 39 varieties subject to accelerated inscription to the Common Catalogue included any GMO varieties. All delegations stated that, to the best of their knowledge, they did not.

Than the Standing Committee note that, pursuant to Article 15(4) of Council Directive 70/457/EEC, the delegations of all Member States stated that their respective countries did not intend to lodge any application under the procedure laid down in Article 15(2) of that Directive in respect of these 39 varieties, which were accepted in the other Member States and for which the communications provided for in Article 10(1) and (2) of the said Directive were made.

7. **Minimum Germination Capacity of Seed Triticale**

A possible reduction of the current standard on germination capacity of seed of triticale would contribute to the possible removal of reservations from certain Member States on the proposal COM(93) 598 presented by the Commission to the Council: the repeal of the possibility for the Member States to reduce unilaterally the aforementioned standard for their own territories, would result in a common minimum standard for the entire Union.

Due to the shortage of time the item was not discussed. However the Committee acknowledged the written information submitted by several Member States having experienced low germination in Triticale seed.
8. **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Commission noted:

(a) a progress report on the codification of the seed directive,
(b) requests of certain Member States in respect of the import of seed potatoes from Canada,
(c) an application of Austria concerning the authorisation for temporarily marketing of vine propagating material to be imported from Hungary and Romania,
(d) an information from the Netherlands on the GMO potato varieties APRIORI and APROPOS (letter dated 29.09.1998)
(e) a pending UK request on the removal of derogations on the Agricultural Common Catalogue granted since 1976,
(f) a letter from Denmark on the “splitting up of the official inspection of seed potatoes between two different Member States” (letter dated 10 September 1998),
(g) a Danish request for derogation as regards to examination of fodder seed for wild oats (letter dated 10 September 1998),
(h) the Member States’ information on their decision to participate in the seed sampling and testing experiments under the Commission Decision 98/320/EC

A. CHECCHI LANG  
Director

_N.B.: The measures on which the Committee has given an opinion are subject to the appropriate procedure for formal adoption by the Commission._