

## Draft Report

### Advisory group on agriculture and environment: 7/12/2012

Chaired by: Trees Robijns (BirdLife Europe)

#### 0. Introduction

##### 1. Election of Chair(wo)man and Vice Chairman.

Ms. Trees Robijns, BirdLife Europe, presented herself as Chairwoman

Mr. Laenghauer, COPA-COGECA (Austria), presented himself as Vice Chairman

Votes for Chairwoman: no abstentions, no against, large majority

Votes for the Vice Chairman: 1 abstention, no against, large majority

Both candidates were confirmed by the advisory group.

Comment [TR1]: Affiliation?

##### 2. Adoption of the agenda and the report of the last meeting of 19/06/2012 drafted by the previous Chairwoman

a. There were no remarks on the report.

b. The agenda had to be amended as point 6 (presentation of the EC Communication “Blueprint to safeguard Europe’s waters” – discussion) could not be carried out due to sickness of the presenter (DG ENV D1). The PowerPoint presentation will be distributed to the members via email later. No AOB points were introduced by the members.

##### 3. The Future of the Common Agricultural Policy

###### 3.1. Presentation of COM position on greening (based on three questions)

a. Introduction on greening by DG AGRI: EC is in listening mode since there is nothing new. She recalled the thinking of the original greening proposal. Sustainability is one of the key issues of the CAP. Greening in pillar 1 is embedded within the framework of cross-compliance and dedicated measures under rural development. This is all accompanied by the FAS, EIP and agriculture research. Discussions might focus on greening, but the other elements should not be forgotten.

For the greening: they had simple and annual measures in mind which applied in the same way to all MS. Also in the greening concept paper, they offered some flexibility but the principles were kept: environmental condition and level playing field. Many new ideas are now discussed. They could be integrated but they need to assess them on the basis that they cannot cause distortions among farmers and that the environmental objectives are kept. The implementation mechanism remains clear. From both the parliament and the council, the implementation mechanism seems difficult, but they will await final positions.

b. 1<sup>st</sup> question:

**COPA-COGECA** thinks it is a good idea to go into these issues of implementation with a positive approach. We have to start from the idea of implementation across Europe and bear in mind the economic and social conditions in the different agricultural systems. Therefore it is very difficult to have options for the way forward and still necessary to consider issues such as equivalence and certification. Greening is very important but we also think that implementation should be done clearly with objective criteria and above all we need to do it with real understanding of the diversity. It is a difficult task, it is not just the three questions here, they help raise issues and begin debating possible ways forward to solve the issues, but are not limited to that. COPA-COGECA would like all of us to discuss this in a positive way and in a way that respects the diversity of farming practices in the EU.

**EEB** : when it comes to the greening element, we need to look at all options and explore what is there. We have issues with what equivalence represents. The greening is a justification of the payment in pillar 1. If it takes things outside of pillar 1 into account for the payment, will it then be transparent and easy to apply? EC wants it to be easy and annual and applicable for all farmers on an

equal level playing field. If equivalence is chosen, how would this fairness be maintained? If we watch how simplification arguments have been used, it is interesting as the greening is already quite simple. But by introducing equivalence, that raises points on maintaining a simple system and questions on how that would work.

**ECVC :** the problem with equivalence is in some ways also an advantage. The EC always recognized that the small farms are the representation of biodiversity and the environment. They also give points to the diversity that is not always so for productive agriculture and we need to ensure that pillar 1 does not go against this. ECVC is in favour of equivalence, but by transferring money from Pillar 1 to pillar 2.

**COPA-COGECA:** Equivalence is an important element to take into account. Since it recognizes the points that are already there, such as AEM or measures carried out for small parcels. We would also like equivalence for mountainous zones. In terms of who should recognize it, for DE, it should be the federal level, with EU recognition. This is one forum here to discuss about it but there are also other fora. We would like the EC to give more ideas on what will happen.

**EEB:** if we talk about equivalence of impacts, which is now on the table of the EP and council, it seems that the doc of the EC was on equivalence of measures. Questions can be raised: which criteria, which indicators, who will verify. Will the EC have to check, will a new unit need to be created verifying everything? It is also a threat to the communality of the system and creates more competitiveness between the farmers, definitely if it could vary between regions. It will increase administrative burden and costs. We also asked questions in the simplification advisory group and we did not get any response. I would be pleased if there would be new elements. It would be interesting to see the position of the EC.

**CEJA :** I do not agree with some of the comments that greening would simplify things, it is the opposite. Farmers see it to be more complex. Greening itself involves complexity and of course cross-compliance is still applied and this makes things even more complicated. For equivalence, it is good that the commission has recognized, in order to simplify and not to burden farmers. For us it would be better to talk about equivalence of ecology and that is common sense. Recognizing equivalence in AEM, management plans and all of that would be positive.

**COPA-COGECA:** It appears to be probable that agriculture will be included in the 7% clause. This means however that digitalization of landscape elements will have to take place by 2013 which will involve substantial administrative burden. This will raise a question: how will this be managed? In AU, we do not believe that further digitalization can take place within this period. The other point is about the equivalence of these measures, should that depend on the success of the measures in question? That depends on the indicators. Finally, we must avoid a lengthy discussion nationally.

**COPA COGECA:** that because EU is so diverse, equivalence is needed and it must go beyond the greening. There are measures in the second pillar and they should be complementary to the measures suggested by the EC. It should be equivalence in the framework for the EU.

**RESPONSE** ??????: There are 3 current aspects we need to look at: 1. How do we implement this without adding an administrative burden in addition to what we already have. This will be one big issue that they will look at in the discussions. EC cannot give more info for the moment on this. 2. Assure that there is no distortion among MS and among farmers within MS. 3. We need clear rules on equivalence. Conclusion so far: for the EC it is based on the equivalence of practices because that is the only way in which we have no distortion. But of course negotiations evolve and hence no final decision is taken.

**RESPONSE DG AGRI:** Question on how to measure the different landscape elements through digitalization. EC is working on it. The EC would like that the administrative controls are fully satisfactory and therefore they need digitalization. But the MS authorities are trying to find another way so they are working on it.

| c. Question 2:

**COPA COGECA:** if we recognise that there are different farming systems and different agriculture, we need to accept that there is equivalence: so different types of agriculture needs flexibility. Hence the use of certification is necessary. The current certification systems already certify the farmers on: the labour law with its employees, the environmental law, the animal law, etc. Certification could also assure that greening becomes part of all this.

**EEB:** In FR, we have 3 levels of certification and for FNE only the third level – Haute valeur environnementale – could qualify as equivalent. But if we base ourselves on the same measures, than even this level does not comply because not all the measures are included. This would mean we need to change the measures and this would include an administrative burden.

**EEB:** In IE, we have a certification scheme: origin green. There are some local certification schemes, some big some small. This muddles the water, because the question is what are the standards for these schemes. Organic is seen as greening, it is seen as being equivalent, organic farmers are recognized because they are regulated, monitored and certified. So every Certification Scheme needs to be equivalent to the credibility of organic. Certification seems to create a huge level of bureaucracy: does it apply to just biodiversity or also carbon or water. How do you compare carbon capture to maintenance of water quality or biodiversity loss? It seems to be very complicated to produce these certification schemes. The national level is regulating what goes into the scheme. Does that mean that the product of the farm would be of a higher value? How would that then compare to the organic farming, who already have a lot of bureaucracy but get real higher value. With this, we are placing organic farmers at risk. If it would be based on actions instead of measures, would it be the cost of the action or the expected outcome of the action?

**COPA COGECA:** I am also in favour of the second FR level of certification to count towards the equivalence in certification.

**EEB:** Certification systems seem to be quite complex for us therefore I asked EEB members whether there were certification schemes for equivalent practices. Outcome is that in very rare cases you have similar practices then the greening measures of the EC. In certain cases there are no systems in place, will then the MS need to put in place new systems? In some MS it is just covering cross compliance (little red tractor in the UK). What happens if you have equivalent practices, but not all three of them? Would it be then green by definition for just one measure, this sounds a bit complex. Would they need to do other controls for the two other measures? It would be good to have clarification on this.

**COPA COGECA:** We are in favour to keep certification on the table. It is about a choice of flexibility and diversity. We are aware of uncertainties about what greening would look like in the future and budget is also uncertain. Depending on the MS, depending on the type of scheme, they could be adapted to what is there in future, or maybe some schemes could already be ready now.

**EEB:** I have a practical case in Slovenia that shows to be cautious: we have schemes that are national quality schemes and we cannot measure anything re environment or biodiversity in there. It has been more or less just money distribution, if we want to promote it with consumers, then you have strong misleading factors. This is just confirming what EEB told before: that this would be a problem for organic farmers profiting from good existing certification schemes.

**COPA COGECA:** Certification in Spain works well, and there is a high environmental content there. In the vast majority of cases, it is the Spanish government, hence the MS, that certifies that the measures are fulfilled. We support certification but we do not want it to add cost and administrative burden for the farmers or for MS.

**RESPONSE ??????:** EC cannot predict the outcome of the greening negotiations. What Commissioner stated, we look into the certification schemes, we did an opening with the concept paper. But we would look at this really with a view that the greening objectives are kept. In some MS there might be certification schemes well suited in others less well. EC will look at clear indicators and clear framework on what will apply and what not and this is still under discussion.

d. Question 3:

**COPA COGECA:** In Finland we have a lot of work done on greening component in pillar 2. Hence we need to study the pitfalls as well: e.g. double funding or less funding for AEM. A lot of measures and work are already done and this should be acknowledged and recognized in future planning. We need to simplify as already said. It could be fair and simple method to accept this AE program as a greening component in pillar 1. We have such greening measures like buffer zones and fields set aside for biodiversity, and we see there are a lot of elements the same in the greening. It would be fair and simple if we could find some cooperation between both pillar 1 and 2.

**CEJA:** For us AEM is obviously consistent. AEM should be improved and consistent with greening. If you think that these environmental measures are above the level of greening. Then they should be Green-by-definition.

**EEB:** We understand that greening increases fears for pillar 2 but it is about greening the whole of the CAP (P1 and P2), it is also about trying to get more dark green measures under pillar 2: more targeted and more efficient measures. In its greening concept paper, the EC stated that it needs to be the same measure and the ambition needs to go beyond. But we see that people are trying to get all AEM to be counted under greening which would miss the point. It would lead to double funding. It would not be understood by the taxpayers. It would also cause trouble for the baseline of pillar 2.

**COPA COGECA:** Question: if AEM is an option on the table, AEM would work together with greening. However if there is a delay on the RDPs, what does the EC see as possible solution?

**RESPONSE ??????:** EC reassures that intention was to have greening and therefore to have a raised baseline for the second pillar. EC wants more targeted measures to do a better job. EC always had this idea in mind of the different layers that build on each other. That should not be forgotten when we use AEM for greening, it is not the idea of using this argument for diluting the overall ideas and objectives of the greening. However in many MS it is done well and a lot of efforts have been done. The EC is looking into ways of how to recognize these elements. Also repeat that we cannot pay twice for same efforts. Re the payment delays, EC is working on this at the moment.

### 3.2. Presentation of the IEEP study “Addressing biodiversity and habitat preservation through measures applied under the CAP” – discussion (IEEP)

a. Introduction about IEEP. The study was carried out between November 2010 and November 2011. It was finalized when the EC published its proposals hence it preceded previous discussion (point 3.1). Good to take a step back and look more at the principles for addressing biodiversity and habitat preservation under the CAP.

b. Presentation by Jana Polakova (see circa)

c. questions

**EEB :** you mentioned eligibility. We have noticed that in order to be eligible, many habitats were lost or removed. Sometimes, bare rock was taken out to sow grass so that it became eligible. You did not raise a solution on how this could be remedied. Especially in Ireland, the problem seemed to be falling between two levels of legislations (MS or EU) and the real problem was not identified.

**Copa cogeca:** in AU RDP, we spend considerable sums on BD. In remote rural areas, BD is lost due to abandonment of agricultural land. This is detrimental to BD. Furthermore, more land is being set aside over periods of 10 to 15 years. In AU, this happens with 15 to 20ha every day. Land is also happening with land for transport and industrial infrastructure. That also needs to be included.

**ECVC:** Would also have appreciated to see more the problems linked to how the CAP has been bad for BD (e.g. monocultures). It seems that now there is more attention for protection of the money than protection of the BD. We should stop with this notion of productivity only, as we would want this agriculture to survive.

**COPA COGECA:** Study supports the new proposals for CAP reform but we should not forget the farmers' perspective. CAP is intended to apply to agriculture and agro-forestry and it is intended to support good management of the productive process. To provide for society, public goods, amongst which BD is one. It would be very bad for European biodiversity if there were no agriculture, a large

part of EU biodiversity is linked to our way of farming. It is important not have imbalances between biodiversity and agriculture. It should be a win-win situation. Some imbalance could arise but we should try to include strategies for development in Europe which include both Ag and BD.

**RESPONSE IEEP:** re Copland: indeed IE was one of the MS where this happened at quite significant scale and there were others: SW, EE, BU, FR, etc. We could not go into the technical detail because the solutions are not straightforward and the study was too large to go into those details. The purpose of the study is just to highlight that it plays a role. It is an issue of implementation and national or regional interpretation.

Re COPA COGECA and ECVC: key message coming out of the study are that semi-natural grasslands are very important, also for EU BD, and they do depend on maintenance of low intensity farming. BD does depend on ag management. So if measures to protect BD need to be taken it has to be tailored and targeted to those less intensive areas. To reduce the external impacts on BD is also very important. The study was not meant to say: BD should be there and not ag.

Re Martins: The imbalance question was part of what we investigated and what we put there as a strategic priority. There is a need to prioritize also between the different functions of agriculture. To me, BD is not just something that grows out there, it is the integrity of habitats that have a certain diversity of species. There is no evidence that we have an oversupply of BD. In times of climate change and not enough budget, there might be trade-offs between the different objectives. However all of these decisions need to be taken consciously and often we have seen that BD has been written off and not taken into account in a serious way.

**COPA COGECA:** We have looked clearly at ag areas, but should we also look to others? Are there other ag equivalent areas (e.g. set aside) that are used for the protection of nature? If we have an industrial plot or road or other infrastructure project, then should you at the same time not also create some ecological equivalence elsewhere? And of course this will mean a loss of land that might otherwise be available for agriculture. We need to consider that aspect as well.

**CEJA:** some comments and a proposal. This is a very full concrete but I do not know whether farmers were involved in preparing this study. The study is a bit unbalanced (contribution of universities, and BD organizations), but it would be useful to include the points of views of farmers. Not sure if that was considered when doing the study.

Something that is clear that there should be an increase in the need of funding for BD. It should be useful if we take home this idea that the CAP may have negative effects for the environment.

Proposal to use the AG to see how environmental measures can be targeted to help BD and the environment. I would like to ask the chair whether it would be possible to hold an ad-hoc meeting, so that we could provide suggestions about what AEM for BD could be focused on in the next period.

**Kingston:** RE Irish farmers. Based on the comments made before, I do not want people to think that there was wide-scale habitat destruction in Ireland. The majority of the biodiversity destruction caused in these areas, would have been caused by destocking. Forced upon farming by environmental reasons, and now farmers are now again pushed to restock. I am happy that this study has recognized there is a place for more intensive and less intensive ag. My own farm has a more env friendly habitat and more intensive areas.

**CHAIR:** point of CEJA well taken. This could be included in the next strategic agenda. I would also like to mentioned the other study of IEEP which they carried out for the RSPB. This is specifically to look at RD regulation and how it can be used in a positive way for the environment. I would also like to encourage people to get in contact with Jana in case they have other questions and remarks.

Link to the RSPB study: [www.ieep.eu/assets/985/IEEP\\_2012\\_Fit\\_for\\_the\\_environment.pdf](http://www.ieep.eu/assets/985/IEEP_2012_Fit_for_the_environment.pdf)

#### 4. Waste: update on the Commission's work on the definition of "end of waste" criteria for biodegradable waste – discussion (DG ENV C2)

a) presentation (see circa)

The EC is looking for input on content of the final workshop: specifically experts' opinion on safe limits for different pollutants in the soil and the description of impacts. If we were to take one or another approach (mixed vs non-mix material) what would be the impact on the market, etc

b) questions

**COPA COGECA:** We are very concerned about protection of our cultivated soils if we are recycling nutrients in sludge. You mentioned a long list of organic substances of dioxins but you did not mention pharmaceuticals: why not?

**ECVC:** I am surprised that in your study you do not mention the GHG needed for the production of fertilizers and pesticides. Specifically in the frame of the methanisation of waste, we should look at the problem of ammonium where we are foreseeing problems between now and 2020.

**COPA COGECA:** I am opposed to the "tri metia organique" for compost. Why do we not question this proposal? The criteria are not enough for the protection of our soils.

**COPA COGECA:** In legal terms, how would this work when different levels have different criteria ? E.g. in Germany, the criteria are stricter than in the EU. How can the farmers know what they should take into account?

What do you mean with classification: the DE government has stated that the sludge and slurry is not a waste. I thought that the EU and DE had reached agreement on this point, but not sure how this would have an effect.

**Comment [TR2]:** Did not understand properly

**Comment [TR3]:** Correct translation of dechet d'elevage?

#### RESPONSE DG ENV :

Re COPA-COGECA on sludge: pharmaceuticals were not taken into account, because for sewage sludge, the analysis found no sign of increased risk of pharmaceuticals or other organic substances, with the exception of PFC in sewage sludge much higher than in other sources. But for the moment, no MS apart from DE and AU decided to limit the amount of PFC in the sewage sludge. With the exception of PFC we have no other evidence of presence of organic contaminants in organic fertilizing materials.

Re ECVC question on GHG emissions from methanisation ↓, the end of waste criteria concerns the quality of the products and not the emissions from methanisation plant itself. There is no discussion on regulation of such emissions right now. Nevertheless the big plants fall under the industrial emission directive. Methanisation have a positive balance of GHG emissions thanks to the biogas produced.

Re soil quality: of course it is a problem, here we speak about quality of the product put on the market (and not about rules of its use), maybe I should mention that as with other fertilizers the MS will have a freedom of regulating the application of fertilizers. So MS at their level may steer how to avoid over-fertilization or contamination of soil with specific materials. But it has to be done on non-discriminatory rules as then we enter the free market discussion.

Re: DE vs EU law: This is a very interesting legal question. In theory, the end of waste criteria is based on waste directive. It allows MS to introduce the most stringent rules. If challenged, the burden of proof is on the MS which shall prove why the stricter rules are necessary. If this is the case it might also be problematic, because so far we have not seen evidence that the proposed limits are not good enough.

**Comment [BZA4]:** Digestate is solid/liquid residue of methanisation – I propose redrafting for clarity

**Comment [TR5]:** Did not understand the word properly

**COPA COGECA:** appreciate there will be another meeting next year where this will be discussed again. Question the fertilizer regulation, will this change the direction of the end of waste criteria? We have got a number of concerns about the appropriateness in this area. I have no comments for now on safe limits but in addition to the concerns, we also have some concerns on the methodology, number of analysis undertaken, the environmental health risk assessment underpinning the values, etc.

**RESPONSE DG ENV:** There is a clear link between end-of-waste process and the fertilizer legislation. If the technical report on end-of-waste is not "strong" enough to justify end-of-waste legislation then

instead of having two discussions, we will have one under the fertilizer regulation. Then speaking about fertilizer regulation and its application, I would like to recall that already today with mutual recognition principle, the MS should allow the use of fertilizers which have been approved in any other MS. I.e. we already have a situation to have a lack of legal certainty. This work was to provide a clarification and a form of uniformity. For the moment, most compost is used domestically. There is not a lot of trans-national trade. Although with common quality standards, the market would have improved. To sum up, the political decision is inevitable, then the question is whether it can be solved on the end of waste criteria and comitology process or if no consensus will be reached here and the discussion will be repeated under co-decision with the fertilizer legislation.

#### 5. Update on the review of the EU air policy - discussion (DG ENV D1):

a) information: The Commission is currently revising the EU air pollution policy and legal framework. By September 2013, an update on the 2005 thematic strategy on air pollution, complemented by appropriate legal proposals, is foreseen. Emissions from the Agriculture sector, and in particular from manure management is subject of the review. Today (7/12) an online stakeholder consultation on main policy options to be considered for the review was launched<sup>1</sup>. The review is informed by stakeholder groups where people have been giving input, so this is not the only opportunity to give input.

b) ppt (see circa)

c) questions

**EEB:** Appreciate to point out the ammonia problem. You mentioned that that 90% of these emissions come from agriculture. Do you propose anything specific for the ag sector? We advocate emission limits for cattle farms, or BATs (best available techniques). EEB will draft a paper on this that will be circulated. An observation on the slide of the complexity: it seems that agriculture is not linked with methane emissions, is this not a mistake?

**COPA COGECA:** The issue linked to urea fertilisers worries me. It is best to leave decision on choice of fertiliser to the farmer. We already have a big challenge to produce more food and minimizing the impact on environment. I understand that some fertilizer manufacturers are keen to help produce fertilizers from urea. That would be positive both for the sector and for the environment. Furthermore, it is a challenging to maintain reliable data of farmers' achievements and improvements. I went to a workshop looking at farmers' innovative solutions to achieve sustainable intensification and each farmer came up with a range of different changes that he thought would be useful and applicable. But in most cases those changes could not be quantified. It is therefore difficult to capture the benefits from these issues correctly.

**COPA COGECA:** it is necessary to link air quality policy with climate policy. Amongst others, you gave us an example of fertilizer management and measures that could be adopted to reduce GHGs, so there are positive synergies. Similarly it is suitable for the implementation of certain measures to illustrate the importance of this program. One issue that has been mentioned is a conflict of objectives with other policies, e.g. animal husbandry that may contradict some of the climate aspects. Obviously, compulsory obligations to keep animals in fresh air may have a certain climate impact. In AU we cover some of this in our own legislation and we would be open to have some discussions with other DGs such as envi and sanc to make it consistent.

**ECVC:** Do you consult with other DGs? As others have mentioned, the issue of methanisation is especially relevant for the pork business.

**COPA COGECA:** If we look at sources and sectors that are suffering from air pollution, ag would be on top of list. Farmers are also contributors to the problem, because of the quality and quantity of air pollution. There is also a loss of species plant nutrients and nitrogen. We do our best to improve nitrogen uptake. There are also special manure treatments and spreading techniques available to

**Comment [UB06]:** I think the point that Copa wanted to make was that there are emerging technologies that seek to limit emissions from urea-based fertilisers, despite the fact that such fertilisers emit more ammonia than less volatile fertilisers such as ammonium nitrate.

**Comment [UB07]:** ?

<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-1337\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-1337_en.htm)

reduce emissions to air. These are considered to be updated in FI too. Urea-based fertilisers causes about 20% more ammonia losses to air than ammonium nitrate. Through direct injection of manure into the soil, emissions will be more limited.

**COPA COGECA:** integration of policies. For the moment, in PT the dairy producers give priority to water protection when investing. But if now we introduce new obligations because of air quality or climate change, perhaps these may counteract these investments. It would be conflicting investments, making farm management difficult. When we do this investment to protect the right thing for everything.

Comment [UB08]: ?

**RESPONSE DG ENV C3:** I would encourage participants to take part of the online communication (see link on previous page). And also perhaps make your view and ideas heard through COPA (representing the farmers) in the stakeholder expert group on air quality.

RE EEB on ammonia: we do not have a lot of EU legislation on ammonia today: only a ceiling and potential (voluntary) support measures through the RDP. So we will consider carefully the level of ambition for the future emission ceiling for ammonia that for 2020 and 2025. The Challenge lies in finding the balance between strict legislation and the flexibility that farmers and MS need. As part of the review, we have recently launched a dedicated study on possible EU action on manure management, which is a key measure to reduce ammonia emissions. We are also considering other agri-related measures, however it is a bit too early to go into details. The industrial emissions directive covers some of the large farms already, but it is unlikely that we would seek to open this directive again as it was recently agreed.

Substitution of urea-based fertilisers, which have high ammonia emissions, with other less volatile fertilisers such as ammonium nitrate could be an effective way to push down overall ammonia emissions from agriculture. Here, we need to find a balance between flexibility for farmers and air quality protection. We should work together to find an appropriate solution.

Re consistency and coherence: we work very closely with DG AGRI and DG CLIMA, as well as with DG ENERGY, DG MOVE, etc, with a view to ensure that the proposal will be policy coherent. Shile in general air policy provides win-win solutions for climate and vice versa (if you reduce down air pollution, you generally reduce GHGs at the same time), there might also be trade-offs which may need specific attention. . Methane: it is both an air pollutant and a greenhouse gas. Methane is a building block (precursor gas) for ozone formation, which has significant negative effects both for health and for crop damage. If we push down methane and ozone concentrations, we will thus increase crop yield for farmers, creating a win-win situation. As methane is a global greenhouse-gas, emission cuts in the EU should be paired by reductions also in other parts of the world to be fully effective. Re good practice: there is clearly a lot of positive actions and examples on reducing air pollution from agriculture. The challenge is to get the good practice more widespread throughout the EU. For this we need a mix of encouragement, better regulation and support measures, and the challenge is often to find the right balance to ensure overall positive synergy effects.

#### 7. Update on the application of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and environmental Impact Assessment Directives to agricultural activities (DG ENV A3)

a) information: We need feedback first for our longer term thinking of revision the SEA directive, especially the good and bad experience on the RDPs. On the EIAD; we would like feedback on issues such as that it is too bureaucratic, but also we need feedback to adjust the EIAD to new environmental challenges: BD, climate change, etc.

Practically that means for EIAD: you can do your lobby work now if some items are missing. But for the SEA: the EC is just beginning the preparation of the next report, so if you have experience/studies, we would be interested so we can produce a meaningful report.

b) presentation (see circa)

c) questions



**COPA COGECA:** question on the revision of the directives. We are at the beginning of the discussions re the potential impacts of the proposals in the UK. We hope to see better what the changes might mean. One of the concerns was the proposed changes to the timetable for screening the procedures, what that might mean about the projects implementation. Question on alternative sites should also be examined.

**COPA COGECA :** The farmers also are impacted by the directive. As we said, we see the development of compensation measures that also risk decreasing the total area available. Sometimes, the time for the procedure takes too long (e.g. for the building of new stables, water reserves, etc). We need a balanced text.

**CHAIR:** There seems to be an issue especially with grasslands in NATURA 2000 sites, where we have noticed in several instances that high biodiverse (semi-natural) grasslands are destroyed and that no impact assessment has to be carried out. These are often the very habitats for which these areas where protected in the first place. It seems therefore necessary that these types of agricultural projects (the conversion or ploughing of grasslands) is also seen as a project and can hence be impact assessed. You can find more information with our colleagues of BSPB (BU BirdLife partner) and NABU (DE BirdLife partner) who have seriously looked into these issues. (see the DE report of NABU: [http://www.nabu.de/imperia/md/content/nabude/landwirtschaft/gruenland/nabu\\_gr\\_nlandstudie.pdf](http://www.nabu.de/imperia/md/content/nabude/landwirtschaft/gruenland/nabu_gr_nlandstudie.pdf) )

**COPA COGECA:** This directive is about environment and quality of life. It includes food and energy, agriculture and how we can produce it. We need the competitiveness and that these farming practices to survive in future so we have nutrients and food in future.

**RESPONSE DG ENV:** RE BU: it depends on whether it is a plan or a concrete project. If it is a plan, you need a full SEA, if there are plans that have impacts on N2K sites, we need to do both an assessment on the habitats directive and a full SEA. It depends on the BU implementation.

Re the revision process: the directive is not to stop development, it is a description and an assessment of projects prior to their approval; it is also on seeing who is affected by the pollution. E.g. the human beings, is not just about population but also about impacts on human health. On the other hand, the amendments proposed by the Commission also aim at ensuring a level playing field and helping competitiveness: the average of an EIA is 11.5 months. However, in some MS it takes 2 years and in some it is 6 months; we try to make this more an average. The timeframes are meant to accelerate the process not to overburden it.

Re alternatives: The alternatives are only needed when you do a full EIA. If you say nothing on alternatives, then we do not see how a proper decision can be taken. The fact to consider alternatives, e.g. location, design of the project, mostly this is the situation for highways, etc. This can also be for ag. The Commission's proposal also introduced a clearer assessment related to the impacts on land and soil. The idea is not to overburden the process, but to have a report that says what is the impact, consult with the public and the stakeholders and then it is up to the competent authority to take a decision. If the decision is informed, the project will be implemented in a good manner. It can even help the legitimacy/social acceptability of the project (which means less litigation).

#### LUNCHBREAK

#### 6. Presentation of the EC Communication “Blueprint to safeguard Europe’s waters” – discussion (DG ENV D1)

Due to sickness, this presentation was cancelled.

The powerpoint can be found back on circa.

#### 8. Sustainable Consumption and Production –debriefing of the Hearing o Sustainable Food (European Commission, Brussels, 19-20<sup>th</sup> November) (DG AGRI L and DG ENV):

a) information + oral presentation: you can find all the presentations here: **if you go to the website.**

**Comment [TR9]:** Include link to website: if you go to the website (DG agri) and you click under events, you will find under heading sustainable food, workshop ... from foresight to better implementing policies

**DG AGRI:** *The Flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 Strategy – A resource efficient Europe* – calls for an increase in resource efficiency. Last September the EC presented the *Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe* where it stresses that the natural resource base is being eroded, highlighting food as a priority area for taking action. The roadmap states the Commission will assess how best to limit food waste throughout the supply chain and announces the ambition to halve it by the year 2020. It further announces it will consider ways to lower the environmental impact of food production and consumption patterns via a Communication on Sustainable Food in 2013. In preparing for this Communication, the aim of the hearing was to discuss the experience of actors and stakeholders engaged in initiatives to foster food sustainability and to draw first lessons for the relevant Union's policies and initiatives.

Food is multi-faceted: it's about life and health, the local economy and the environment, it relates with equity and social justice, etc. In industrial societies food production and consumption patterns became sophisticated and complex, involving a multitude of actors along "the food chain" - or what is also better coined as the "food system". Different policies are exerting influence on their activities: the CAP, environmental, trade, competition and consumer protection policies, to name only but a few. As these are adapting to evolving circumstances, there is a permanent concern about coherence and need to identify opportunities for better synergies. Equally, there is a concern about possible policy gaps for emerging issues not neatly fitting within the boundaries of existing policies or directly corresponding with their specific objectives and instruments.

Metropolitan food strategies popping up throughout Europe - and in other regions of the OECD - testify of the need for integrated approaches towards food as common to all levels of governance. With such strategies, public bodies give themselves a coherent framework to steer their various food related actions in their field of responsibility and to help the cooperation needed among the actors of the food system to improve sustainability. The possible need for such a strategy at EU level will be a key question of the forthcoming Communication.

To prepare decisions on the initiative, the EC services are building an evidence base conducting an impact assessment steered by an inter- service group. The 19-20 November hearing/workshop aimed at listening to interested parties and stakeholders was among the very first steps of the impact assessment process. 75 people, representing the actors of the food system and stakeholders with interest in food related issues, health and nutrition, regional authorities attended together with experts involved in recent global food foresights and with representatives of the EC services involved in the preparation of the Communication (the participant's list can be found on the website). The next public step is to prepare a consultation document, describing the issues and possible action themes and initiatives, and asking for the contribution of stakeholders in completing and challenging the diagnosis and in helping the EC services to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the initiatives explored. Such a consultation document should be presented early 2013.

**DG ENV:** I am responsible with another colleague for the preparation of the sustainable food communication. We are now trying to define the scope of the problem and what will be the objectives to address the underlying causes. The consultation document was expected for January, now it will be early 2013.

b) questions:

**COPA COGECA:** The DE government and ag ministry also worked a lot on the issue of food waste. We have the impression that consumers do not value food and the work of the farmers enough. The CAP also encourages sometimes also the issue of waste. Especially problematic are issues such as the expiration date.

**ECVC:** In your study, did you also give attention to issues outside of ag such as the expiration date already mentioned? This is outside of the farmers' power and is caused by issues between the field and the plate. Did you look into the food producer industry and the consumers? What is your opinion and wish to potentially make some trouble with the agro-industry.

**RESPONSE DG AGRI:** Re food waste, the EC has done studies on this topic and stakeholders are involved in this discussion. The question is whether we want to look at the whole system? Because if

we do not look at the whole system, we risk drawing conclusions where there are none. Industry is asking us for solutions, supermarkets too.

Re sustainability, we need to try and solve the sustainability in Europe and put order in our own house. Moreover, we should try to avoid negative external consequences but we cannot solve the problems of Africa or Asia. We do have a consensus that our way of producing in Europe is not sustainable, especially when we aim to do the same in the whole world. There is a planetary limit. Another chaired lesson is that we need to focus the work of research much more: our food patterns should be important variables in this research.

Another important issue is the “lock-in”. Too often what we think is conditioned by a series of factors that negate the basic premises we set ourselves in the beginning. Therefore it is important to think outside of these factors and keep sustainability in mind.

Our current, dominant practices are very much conditioned to deliver standardized products which is contradicted by the image the supermarkets give. The idea is diversity but the basis is more and more limited. This also contradicts the issue of resilience: the capability to adapt itself. We need to innovate and thereby search for much more complex and sustainable outcomes. We need to keep all options open, because otherwise we close future opportunities. Therefore public intervention is needed. We are doing our homework, e.g. with the EIP and in opening also the way we support ag in a long term perspective, trying to shape the diets of future consumers towards more healthy and sustainable things (e.g. school food scheme).

**COPA COGECA:** It is essential that we are doing the reflection on sustainable production and consumption. For the farmers it is also difficult, the issue on diversity vs the request for standardization. We are being confronted with that also within the EU. DG environment is preparing the environmental footprint which is going towards standardization, but on the other hand, we should be open towards diversity. So what is the solution for the farmer? He needs to fulfil more standards today to be able to go to the market, but you also want to open the market for new types of products and new commodities? I have concerns which type of support you can foresee. RD can something, we need more.

**EEB :** There is an on-going study on EU forest footprint: the impact of food products on deforestation. How will this be included in the communication?

**COPA COGECA:** Will this study also cover in its scope the relation between the different actors in the food chain, especially the economic part of that relation) and if necessary try to find a balance?

**ECVC:** In your analysis did you include the commercial large agriculture areas ? We would like to get past the debate of the large farmers vs the local production. The consumer goes more and more green. This consumer understands what is not good.

**RESPONSE DG ENV:** The environmental footprint has nothing to do with standardization. It only evaluates what is the environmental footprint of a product.

Re the interactions with EU consumers and what happens everywhere else in the world, needs to be looked at in the communication. We should also take into consideration issues such as biofuels and the role of nutrition. Some agriculture production directs itself already in a more diversified way which is good for the resilience. Finally, we see the second pillar as a very promising policy in this sense.

**RESPONSE DG AGRI:** The principle of food system is very important, but that does not mean that if you are on one side of the system you have always many relationships with the other side of the system. Therefore we should ask what can be done to improve the information among the actors of the system. The role of public authorities to improve and validate this information is important. Among different things, we have explored initiatives to improve business to business communication.

Re the communication: we are assessing the landscape to see if it delivers to the standard needed for sustainable food in 10 to 20 years. So a number of things that were raised, are already addressed

within existing policies. The question is; are they sufficient. It is also not yet sure what will be in the communication, this depends on the impact assessment. Only the waste element is already fixed. Re Relations among the actors in the food chain (e.g.: dominant market power), this is among the key dimensions of the current CAP reform. This goes together with the high forum for the food chain .... If what emerged in terms of a code of conduct of commercial behaviour, the commission could even come with regulation and compulsory disciplines.

**Comment [TR10]:** Did not fully understand this part

**RESPONSE DG ENV:** Re food waste: many false ideas on food waste and wastage. This difference exists in French: "gaspillage" and "dechet". In English there is only one word: food waste: so this is confusing. We have conducted a comprehensive study which can be found back here: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/reports.htm> (BIO IS Preparatory Study on Food Waste across EU 27 (October 2010)). In this there are three documents: abstract of 2p, executive summary of 17p and the full report.

#### 9. AOB:

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It was recognized that the green week overlapped with the next meeting on 5/06 therefore the meeting date would be changed.

#### **NEW DATE: 23 MAY 2013**

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#### *Disclaimer*

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