

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COPA-COGECA
WORKING PARTY ON FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
HELD ON 4TH JUNE 2013**

PRESENT: Van es, Burghard, Lefebvre, De Santis, Vita, Fiordalisi, Corrales, Hoffmann, Braunstein, Greimel, Kicinski, Gotting, Linde, Bedford, Gailite, Aerts, Matousek, Chaloupka, Klaassen, Farrell, Barbier, Guillard, Cardinaud, Dupin, Kärner.

SECRETARIAT: Dejonckheere, Gouveia, Di Rubbo, Petit, Azevedo

GUESTS: Jacquin, Guntinas Rubio, Binard, Buschaert

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting on 13th March

→ The Working Party, chaired by Mr Hans VAN ES, adopted the agenda [[FL\(13\)3708 \(rev.1\)](#)]. The agenda had been adapted because of the cancellation of the Advisory Group meeting on 5th June. DG AGRI representatives would participate in the meeting from 5:00 p.m. and Freshfel and Profel representatives would take part in the meeting.
→ The minutes from the previous meeting were approved [[FL\(13\)3707 \(rev.1\)](#)].

Item 2: Preparation for the Advisory Group meeting on 5th June

→ The Advisory Group meeting on 5th June had been cancelled because of the general strike at the EU institutions and postponed until 1st October (to be confirmed). After having checked that travel agents and airline companies would not reimburse any fees, experts were able to put in a request to DG AGRI for their fees to be reimbursed.
→ **Point 2.i)** Election: Mr Tondini (CONF COOPERATIVE) was the candidate for the Presidency nominated by Copa-Cogeca. The candidates for the Vice-Chair positions were Mr Conforti (Profel/AIPA) and Garcia Fernandez (Freshfel/AILIMPO).
→ **Point 2.ii)** CAP: The representative from the EC was not in a position to explain the ongoing negotiations on the CAP post 2013. The EC intended to use delegated acts to ensure the continuity of the existing system. The Commissioner had announced there would be a report and impact assessment accompanied by proposals in the second half of 2013. According to DG AGRI the problems identified through public consultation included: concentration of offer was lower than the target established in 2007; the complexity of the regulation; and insufficient consumption. Concerning the transitional rules, Member States could choose to extend their national strategy. The next regulations would contain transitional rules which would maintain existing operational programmes for their duration. It was not certain that the reform would be concluded during this legislative period of the EP. The Management Committee examined the changes to Regulation No 543/2011 concerning certain aspects of recognition of POs, controls and sanctions. Regulation 534/2011 had to be split into delegated acts and implementing acts to conform with the Lisbon Treaty. It should change further in 2015 when the EU Council has decided on the reform of the fruit and vegetables sector. CONF COOPERATIVE requested the inclusion of the national strategy under Article 103 of the Single CMO. DG AGRI responded that it was up to the Member State to decide on extending the national strategy.

CONFCOOPERATIVE requested the inclusion of specific provision relating to recognition of FVPOs in Article 109 of the Single CMO. DG AGRI's response was that it could not make a political commitment on this issue. Concerning the extension of POs, DG AGRI was unable to commit to the possibility of revising programmes to combine the advantages of both the old and new systems. The dialogues had resulted in a position in favour of an operational fund for PDOs. If this were to be realised, DG AGRI believed that there would be no reason to delay its application.

→ **Point 2.iii)** Food chain: The High Level Forum's mandate had been extended but its composition was not yet known. Copa-Cogeca had responded to the Green Paper on Unfair Trading Practices (see [FC\(13\)2538 \(rev.4\)](#)). DG MARKT had received 200 responses and a summary of these would be available in September. Copa-Cogeca had launched an inquiry into unfair practices and the results were presented in the WP/Food Chain on 5th June. The main rapporteur for the EP was Cornelis de Jong (COM IMCO, NL). There was no guarantee that the EC would propose legislation. Copa-Cogeca backed a mixture of legislative approaches and codes of good practice.

→ **Point 2.iv)** Plant health issues: The Secretariat presented the conclusions of the workshop on 6th May. It was in the process of drafting position papers and called for contributions. To summarise, the EC proposed compensating operators in the case of an outbreak of a plant disease, based on a list of priority diseases; however, this system would not come into effect while the regulation on plant health was not in force in the Member States. According to the EC proposal the plant passport which was in force only in protected areas would apply to all B2B exchanges on EU soil. In the proposed regulation on official controls, controls linked to quality systems are not taken into account and this is done to avoid the duplication of controls. It sets up the principle of full recovery of the costs incurred by controls and the obligation to collect fees. A debate was scheduled on the report on minor uses at the Agricultural Council on 24th June under Any Other Business. For this reason the Secretariat encourages you to make your Member State aware of this. The rapporteur for the proposed regulations on plant health and plant reproductive material would come from the EP's COM AGRI (Mr Silvestris). The main rapporteur for the proposed regulation on official control would come from COM ENVI (Ms Reimers). The Council had set up working groups. The EC has proposed expanding the scope of the ban on neonicotinoids to include Fipronil. Coldiretti pointed out that it was time to move more quickly on the minor uses dossier given that IPM is set to come into force in 2014. Banning a major family of plant protection products meant farmers would be deprived of ways to tackle the pests which affect plants. The FNP highlighted the issue of imports of fruit and vegetables which contain residues of products which are banned in the EU. ASAJA commented that EFSA seemed to be working for South Africa as the limit for the residue of the product concerned was 2 ppm in the EU compared with 6 ppm in South Africa.

→ **Point 2.v)** Bilateral agreements: The Secretariat presented the state of play on the TTIP. The FNSEA stressed that the strict application of rules of origin must be ensured because the US is a major market for mushrooms from China. CCAE requested that the export records of Member States such as those of Spain be brought to the attention of the EC and also asked for an EU export strategy. Coldiretti was eager to obtain information about the US Anti-Terrorism Act. Freshfel was set to be involved in the task force with FoodDrinkEurope.

→ **Point 2.vi)** Chinese garlic: COLDIRETTI highlighted the issue of triangular trade involving Norway and Chinese garlic.

Item 3: Cost of production in the fruit and vegetables sector: development in payroll costs

→ The FNSEA wanted an ad hoc group to be established to discuss harmonising payroll costs because labour costs make up 70% of production costs. In the Member States with a minimum wage the hourly costs varies between €1 and €10. The fruit and vegetables sector is underrepresented in GEOPA. A note would need to be written to clarify the issues where member organisations should exchange information and to collect existing information.

Item 4: Organic farming: organic glasshouse production

→ Substrate for organic farming: LK wanted recognition of compost-based substrates; LTO held the opinion that soil is needed.

Item 5: A.O.B

- Information concerning Prognosfruit.
- Information concerning ICOP 2013 in Madrid on 15th and 16th October
- COM AGRI initiative report on the situation in the horticulture sector, rapporteur Anthea McIntyre
- EFSA : experts from the strawberry sector