

CC(18)489:1-FG/sd

ARES:
25. 01. 2018
[REDACTED]
C:

[REDACTED]
DG Agri
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 130
BE-1000 Brussels

Brussels, 23rd January 2018

Re: Functioning of DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups

Dear [REDACTED],

I would like to thank you for the fruitful exchange of views held with you and your colleagues on 20th December 2017 regarding the functioning of DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups. I greatly appreciated the receptiveness shown by you and your colleagues to our comments and proposals for improvements of the functioning of these Groups. Let me also underline once again the importance of the work that your services and the sectorial units do for our sector in this context.

All our member organisations expect the continuation of the contacts with DG AGRI services, which we strongly believe contributes to the success of EU policies. Listening to national experts in various sectors brings EU policy work closer to European farmers, agri-cooperatives and other relevant stakeholders, who are directly affected by EU decision-making.

Considering the necessity to guarantee an appropriate functioning of these Civil Dialogue Groups, I would like to underline again the need to ensure that both the rules and the way they are implemented are transparent, consistent and coherent.

In the framework of this transparency, we would kindly ask you for a summary and an explanatory note about the re-allocation of resources between Civil Dialogue Groups that your services are planning to undertake in 2018. This would be essential to organise our work appropriately.

As highlighted by us during the meeting held on 20th December, we have particular concerns about the procedure regarding the election. We consider that it is crucial to keep a separate procedure for sake of transparency and efficiency. Information about the elections (notification for elections/call for applications) should be separated from the Agenda.

Moreover, we would like to strongly encourage the Commission to take due note of the calendar of internal meetings of Copa and Cogeca to prevent potential conflicting dates.

You will find attached to this letter our concrete proposals for improving the functioning of the

CDGs meetings, as well as the calendar of Copa and Cogeca internal meetings.

I am, as all Copa-Cogeca Secretariat is, confident that we will continue a fruitful cooperation in this context, and you can count on our support in this context.

Yours sincerely,



Pekka Pesonen V
Secretary General

Enc.:

DIS(17)9900:1 - Proposals for improving the functioning of the CDG meetings

PR(17)5082:4 - Calendar of Copa and Cogeca Presidencies and Praesidia meetings in 2018

POCC(17)5191:1 - POCC/CC meetings: calendar 2018

CCC(17)5919:2 - CCC meetings: calendar 2018

DG Agriculture and Rural Development's Civil Dialogue Groups

Proposals for improving the functioning of the CDG meetings

Copa and Cogeca support the European Commission service effort in involving stakeholders in the decision making process. The reform of DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups allows a better contribution from the various range of the stakeholders, providing advice from national realities.

Copa and Cogeca proposals should be put in perspective to improve the efficiency of the current system.

I. Preparation of meetings:

➤ General remarks:

- Need to ensure that the rules and the way the CDGs are run is consistent and coherent all across the CDGs.
- Ensure that the calendar of meetings is agreed in advance and circulated in due time. This means that meetings of CDGs should be scheduled six months in advance, taking into account the availability of: Commission representatives, the Chairmanship, the Secretariat of Copa and Cogeca and external invited speakers to the CDG (if it is the case). It is important to guarantee a good coordination, in the CDGs where Copa and Cogeca are not in the Chairmanship, to ensure that the selected date enables a good preparation of meetings.
- Ensure that the Commission services take due note of the calendar of meetings of Copa and Cogeca to prevent difficulties especially in the preparatory meetings (The Secretariat of Copa-Cogeca always send to DG AGRI its calendar of meetings in due time in order to avoid conflicts of dates).
- Reject any and all CDG meetings scheduled for Mondays.
- Ensure that the Chairmanship of the horizontal CDGs prepares a draft agenda preferably 3 months in advance including external speakers should that be the case. Ensure that these external speakers or any other making presentations can be invited extra-quota of the organisation (if the organisation is represented in the CDG).
- In order to keep a "beforehand" approach for the CDGs meeting, the Commission services should organise meetings in a more flexible manner and consult the CDGs as much as concerned before the launch of the inter-service consultation (ex: milk crises, simplification of the single CMO ...).
- Ensure that the Chairmanship of the CDG discusses and agrees the draft agenda with the Head of Unit or Director in charge to prevent unilateral decisions from the services on issues to be discussed and the speakers/officials involved in the debates.

- Ensure that an annotated agenda (including estimated timings) is circulated at least three days before the meeting to all members of the CDGs.
- Ensure that the documents are uploaded onto CIRCABC in due time (at the latest one day prior the meeting), in particular for market outlooks. The documents that are not published before the meeting should be published at the latest two days after the meeting.
- As a solution, a clear mandate should be assigned to specific groups in order to allow the appropriate Commission representative to attend the appropriate CGD meeting.
- Furthermore, the chairmanship of the relative horizontal CDG should be allowed to enter in discussion and request contribution from the sectorial CDG (as an example: the CDG on milk may provide recommendation to the CDG on international aspect of agriculture).
- A proper consultation of the CDG is needed when it comes to legislative developments.
- DG AGRI to take into account the document created by Copa-Cogeca Secretariat that list the Copa-Cogeca staff members responsible for each specific CDGs, as well as the Copa and Cogeca members who are Chairs and Vice-Chairs, in order to guarantee an adequate diffusion of the information.
 - Specific remarks on some CDGs
- On international issues, more regular meetings between the Chairmanships of the CDGs should be organised (as an example, between the Chairmanship of the CDG on milk and the Chairmanship on the CDG on International Aspects of Agriculture).
- Need to remind that the Milk Market Observatory remains a structure for market analysis while the CDG on Milk is the consultative structure for the Commission, also in reference to the work of other EU institutions and bodies.
 - Invitation to the CDG meeting
- We consider that the deadline fixed by the Commission to send the invitation for the meeting and the draft agenda is too short (20 days). This has an impact also on the cost-efficiency as the experts cannot buy their tickets before the invitation it's sent. We consider that the deadline should be of a latest 1 month before the meeting.

II. Running of meetings:

- Election process:
 - The procedure for elections changed in 2017 and this created a lot of confusion and had a negative impact on the process. We consider that is crucial to keep a separate procedure for sake of transparency and efficiency. Information about the elections (notification for elections/call for applications) should be separated from the Agenda.
 - It is fundamental that the Commission services only intervene in this process to launch the call for candidates, indicating the respective deadline, informing the CDG which candidates are standing for election, and running the election procedure during the CDG meetings. In addition, the deadlines should be respected and the Commission should not accept late candidacies.
- Participation:
 - Ensure that once the agenda is agreed on, the relevant Commission experts are available for enough time and do indeed participate in the CDGs meetings. The Commission experts need to adapt their presentation to the needs of the group. Due to the limited

number of meetings per year this is a priority. Furthermore, the Heads of Unit responsible for the issues to be discussed in the meetings should be present.

➤ Distribution of seats:

- Need to authorise the swapping of seats. When there is a half-day CDG subcategory meeting, the Commission should accept that one or two seats could be non-reimbursed.
- Need to reallocate the seats which are not used.

➤ Handling of meetings:

- A diagram which indicates the name of organisations and where representatives are seated should be given to the "minutes taker" at the beginning of each meeting (the Commission representatives and the Chairperson should also be provided with it).
- Ensure that the items on the agenda are covered by the appropriate speaker. In order to allow for a satisfactory exchange of views, written consultation procedures should be avoided as much as possible.
- Need for monitoring and commitment from representatives of the Commission during the meetings. The Commission should ensure a follow-up to the items discussed during a meeting when the next subsequent meeting takes place (i.e. answers should be provided during the next meeting if questions have been previously raised).

➤ Minutes of the meetings:

- The procedures for the deadline to send the minutes changed and we consider that is too short (10 days). We need to take into account that the minutes need to be send for pre-approval to the vice-chairs.
- The Commission should publish the minutes in time for comments from the members

➤ Number of meetings:

- More flexibility is needed when it comes to the number of meetings (especially when, as an example, serious market disturbance are at stake or relevant policy reform discussions).

Calendar of Copa and Cogeca Presidencies and Praesidia meetings in 2018

Tuesday 09/01/2018 Presidency COPA (15.00 - 18.00)	Thursday 22/03/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 17.30)	Wednesday 16/05/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (17.30 - 20.30)	Thursday 12/07/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 17.30)	Thursday 08/11/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 17.30)
Tuesday 16/01/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.00 - 13.00)	Wednesday 25/04/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.30 - 12.30) Cogeca Business Forum (14.30 - 18.00)	Wednesday 13/06/2018 Presidency COGECA (16.00 - 18.00)	Wednesday 12/09/2018 Presidency COGECA (16.00 - 18.00)	Wednesday 28/11/2018 Presidency COGECA (10.30 - 12.30) Cogeca Business Forum (14.30 - 18.00)
Wednesday 21/02/2018 Presidency COGECA (16.00 - 18.00)	Thursday 22/02/2018 Praesidium COGECA (09.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 16.30) Praesidia COPA-COGECA (16.30 - 18.30)	Thursday 14/06/2018 Praesidium COGECA (09.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 16.30) Praesidia COPA-COGECA (16.30 - 18.30)	Thursday 13/09/2018 Praesidium COGECA (09.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 16.30) Praesidia COPA-COGECA (16.30 - 18.30)	Thursday 29/11/2018 Praesidium COGECA (09.00 - 13.00) Presidency COPA (14.30 - 16.30) Praesidia COPA-COGECA (16.30 - 18.30)
Friday 23/02/2018 Praesidium COPA (9.00 - 13.00)	Friday 27/04/2018 Praesidium COPA (9.00 - 13.00)	Friday 15/06/2018 Praesidium COPA (09.00 - 13.00)	Friday 14/09/2018 Praesidium COPA (9.00 - 13.00)	Friday 30/11/2018 Praesidium COPA (9.00 - 13.00)
			10-11/10/2018 Congress of European farmers	

DRAFT

POCC/CCC MEETINGS: CALENDAR 2018

- Thursday, 18th January 2018
- Thursday, 1st February 2018
- Thursday, 8th March 2018
- Thursday, 12th April 2018
- Thursday, 24th May 2018
- Thursday, 28th June 2018
- Tuesday, 4th September 2018
- Thursday, 27th September 2018
- Thursday, 18th October 2018
- Thursday 15th November 2018
- Thursday, 13th December 2018

DRAFT
CCC MEETINGS: CALENDAR 2018

- Wednesday 24th January 2018 (a.m.)
 - Wednesday 07th March 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 18th April 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 30th May 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 11th July 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 05th September 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 17th October 2018 (p.m.)
 - Wednesday 21th November 2018 (p.m.)
-