

DRAFT

**MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE COPA-
COGECA WORKING PARTY ON ENVIRONMENT
ON 22ND MAY 2014**

PRESENT: Bulhao Martins, Pietola, Noerring, Mesa Lopez, Pantano, Tobias, Vondrakova, Mitchell, Soutar, Macijauskas, Stéphanie, Rosas, Längauer, Decock, Ryan, Kingston, Le Corre-Gabens, Guérin, Kruklite, Eksvård, Ulrich, Johansson, Van Westeinde, Dirnena, Matousek, Neumann, Tiainen, Kärner, Di Rollo, Verset, Heijmans, Kicinski, Mulvihill, Bombagli

SECRETARIAT: Andúgar, Bignami, Boudet, Di Rubbo, Neagu, Runge

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Items 1 and 2: Adoption of the agenda (EN(14)2242 (rev.2)) and the draft minutes (EN(13)9166 (rev.1))

→ The agenda was adopted with some changes to the order of the items. The draft minutes of the previous meeting (14th November 2013) were adopted.

Item 3: Elections of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Party on Environment

→ The Chair, Mr Luis Bulhao Martins, took stock of his 2-year mandate. After this, the candidates, Ms Liisa Pietola (MTK) and Mr Niels Peter Noerring (DAFC) introduced themselves and their expectations for the group. Ms Pietola was elected as Chair and Mr Noerring as Vice-Chair by acclamation. The group agreed to elect a second Vice-Chair during the next Working Party meeting.

Item 4: Preparation of the Advisory Group

Item 4.3: The 2030 framework for climate and energy policies – implications for agriculture and land use emissions and removals (LULUCF sector): a. Presentation and discussion of the 2030 framework by the Secretariat (EN(14)4228 (rev.1)); b. Facing increasing extreme weather events in agriculture (article 18 RD, risk management in RD, state aid)

→ a. Members agreed that the proposed EU wide target of 40% GHG reduction was challenging or even unrealistic, since the agricultural sectors in the MS have limited scope for further reductions. Members were analysing the 3 LULUCF options presented by the Commission. The group gave the Secretariat a mandate to organise a meeting of the Task Force “Climate change” in order to deepen the discussion with a view to drafting a position paper.
→ b. An initial exchange of information on national initiatives and available funds to compensate losses in agriculture due to extreme weather events took place. In the context of the implementation of the Floods Directive, agricultural activity in flood plains is of relevance. Furthermore, in the revision of the State aid rules, compensating losses due to adverse climatic events and natural disasters are addressed.

Item 4.4: Update on the proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (former EIA)

→ A representative was scheduled to present the programme the following day.

Item 4.5: Resource efficiency – update by the Secretariat

→ The Commission's Communication on a sustainable food system was expected to be published in June. Looking ahead to its publication, thirteen European umbrella organisations had prepared a declaration (CAFI(14)3348 (rev.2)). A pilot testing project on product environmental footprint (PEF) was ongoing, see link: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/product_footprint.htm.
→ The Commission said it would continue to work on the sustainable use of Phosphorus, but no specific legislative proposal was expected. Instead, this would be addressed in the revision of the Fertiliser Regulation and in the context of the national action plans of the Nitrates Directive.

Item 4.6: Pesticides

a. Update on the state of implementation of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive (SUD)

→ Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is just one part of the SUD. DG Sanco was analysing national plans and preparing a report. Members found it regrettable that fewer and fewer options to ensure plant health were available, including products such as those for preventive treatments and treatments for speciality crops and minor uses. The ERA-NET on IPM was expected to contribute to identifying solutions: see <http://c-ipm.org/>

Item 4.7: Revision of the Fertilisers Regulation

→ The Vice-Chair, Mr Noerring, briefed the group on the Copa-Cogeca workshop held on 26th March 2014 on optimising and innovative nutrient management (see agenda and presentations: EN(14)1636 (rev.4)). The Secretariat is following the revision of the fertilisers regulation under the lead of the Working Party on Cereals.

Item 4.9: Information on the EEA Multiannual Work Programme 2014 – 2018 and on the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) 2014-2020

→ A representative from the EEA was scheduled to present the programme the following day. The Secretariat highlighted that the 7th EAP sets out the environmental work programme for the Commission.

Item 8: Information about the new Civil Dialogue Groups framework and announcement of elections (COM(13)7473 (rev.1))

→ The Chair, Ms Pietola, and the Secretariat provided the state of play (POCC(14)3858 (rev.1)). The current Advisory Group on "Agriculture and Environment" will become the "Civil Dialogue Group on Environment and Climate Change": http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/civil-dialogue-groups/index_en.htm. The information regarding the composition of the civil dialogue groups will be published by the Commission in July.

Item 4.1: State of play of the CAP post 2013 (including delegated acts and guidelines) by the Secretariat (PAC(14)4000 (rev.1))

→ The Secretariat had prepared a table on the implementation of the CAP at national level on the basis of members' contributions (which is regularly updated – PAC(14)2758 (rev.8)). Issues which were of concern to the members of the WP on Environment were: coefficients for N- fixing crops and catch crops, productive use of EFAs and land eligible for EFAs, the baseline set by cross-compliance, funding, grasslands, diversification, evidence of the benefits of greening measures, soil, lack of flexibility, and extra tasks. Everyone agreed that the Commission should show where and how it could work. The Secretariat has included questions on the coherence between "greening" and "AEM" in a questionnaire to collect members' input (PAC(14)4143 (rev.2)). CAP technical fiches were made available on Agri-info.

Item 4.2: Semi-natural pastures / high nature value farmland

→ This point was scheduled to be addressed by the Commission's officials during the meeting the following day, including the designation of sensitive grassland areas outside of Natura 2000.

Item 4.8: Water – update by the Secretariat (EN(14)4239 (rev.1))

→ Several members expressed concerns about obligations for farmers deriving from the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, in particular regarding nutrient management. In several Member States, the national action plans under the Nitrates Directive were under revision. They were becoming even stricter than previously with differences between MS concerning compulsory provisions, and lack of evidence on cost-effectiveness and their environmental benefits. The Secretariat said it would prepare a summary document with the support of MTK (EN(13)9880 (rev.1)).

Item 5: Biodiversity – update by the Secretariat (EN(14)4347 (rev.1))

→ Members asked that in addition to large carnivores, issues concerning beavers and geese be raised in the fitness check on nature legislation. The Secretariat asked members to provide input in view of the upcoming public consultation.

Item 6: Soil and land use

→ The proposal for a soil directive had been withdrawn (OJ C 153, 21st May 2014). The Commission was continuing its work under the angle of “land as a resource”. The Secretariat informed members of the conference organised by the Commission to launch the discussions on 19th June - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/land_use/conference_en.htm. Members exchanged views in order to contribute to the preparation of Mr Pesonen’s speech at the event. The principle of subsidiarity and soil sealing were two issues commonly agreed as key in this debate. The Secretariat said it would follow this issue closely with the WP on the Environment and the environment Task Forces concerned.

Item 7: Air policy: “Clean Air Programme for Europe”

→ The Secretariat presented the programme EN(14)1883 (rev.1). Then the Secretariat presented the draft position paper EN(14)2837 (rev.1), which focused on the revision of the NEC directive and the proposal on reducing air pollutant emissions from medium-sized combustion plants. Members provided additional arguments to be included in the position paper. The paper was scheduled to be approved by the Praesidia by the end of June 2014.

Item 9: AOB

→ The Secretariat informed members about Copa-Cogeca’s participation in the 2014 Green Week on the “Circular Economy” (3rd-6th June). Key messages have been prepared in light of that event (EN(14)3380 (rev.4)), and a workshop organised on 4th June (EN(14)3381 (rev.6)). Copa Vice-President Mr Serra was scheduled to take part in the session on water reuse on 5th June (EN(14)4586 (rev.1)).
