

Final Minutes of the Advisory Group meeting on “Quality of agriculture production” (18/02/2014)

❖ The meeting was chaired by Dr. BENVENUTI

1. Approval of the agenda, the minutes of the meeting held on 18/06/2013 and the strategic agenda

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without further comments. Regarding the agenda for this meeting, the chairman stressed the importance of the Advisory Group on Quality of agriculture production. Some of the points were rejected from the draft agenda and the Group should be updated and involved on the different points even though the issues are also discussed in other Groups. Several organisations were involved in the preparation of the draft Agenda and clarification was asked regarding the rejection of some points.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** requested an update on origin labelling and the intentions of the Commission regarding the new implementing rules in the case of fresh meat, following the motion for a resolution from the European Parliament.

- Representative from **CELCAA** requested an update on article 26.3 on voluntary origin labelling and its application. It was also asked about the trade agreement between Canada and EU given the importance of these agreements for the Geographical indications. The Agreement with the United States is now under discussion and the group should be involved.

- The representative from the **Commission** explained that due to human resources and in order to avoid duplication of discussions, some of the points like promotion were rejected as there is already an Advisory Group on promotion. The same goes for International affairs. In addition to that, in the case of some proposed points there was nothing new to report.

- The **chairman** stressed that quality of agricultural production is very broad, covering different issues and the idea of some agenda points is to have an update on the discussion to be in a position to know the state of play. It is important to know the situation and the group that is leading the discussion in order to report their Organisations. These points have an impact on the quality of the agricultural production.

- Several representatives stressed that documents are not available in advance of the meeting. This would contribute to have a more fruitful discussion.

- Representative from **CELCAA** stressed the importance of having the documents in advance for the points that are on the Agenda. It was requested to include this request in the minutes.

- It was also asked for information on the revision of the Advisory Groups and the future of the Advisory Group on Quality of agriculture production.

- Representative from **BEUC** also requested an update on the new implementing rules on origin labelling for fresh meat.

- The **chairman** also underlined the importance of getting the documents earlier in order to help people to prepare the meeting. Other possibility would be a brief preliminary document that could contain a general picture of all ongoing activities regarding quality. If the point cannot be presented in the Advisory Group, the Group should at least receive a written contribution.

> Strategic agenda:

- The chair explained the strategic agenda, also presented as a written document. It was reiterated the importance of the Advisory Group that provides a forum for exchange between stakeholders and the European

Commission on all matters regarding the quality of EU agricultural products. Quality is perceived as a broad concept that covers different legislations and aspects.

- Some of the main priorities of the Advisory Group for this period are:

- The implementation of Regulation No 1151/2012 including also possible discussions on the creation of new Optional Quality terms.
- Agricultural Policy: implementation of new CAP focusing on quality related issues.
- International trade
- Promotion policy
- Voluntary certification schemes. They have also been introduced in the strategic agenda. More and more, we are faced with issues such as sustainability. The idea would be to work on the follow-up of the consultation on sustainable food systems and monitoring of sustainability schemes.

Assuring the quality of agricultural production is a priority for the entire food chain and apart from PDOs or PGIs, new labels are found at the supermarket frequently. Quality is being emphasized through some labels but they are not necessarily connected to the work of farmers and agri-Cooperatives. Quality of production has to be promoted.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** underlined the importance of discussing also other issues such as food fraud and controls and this also has a direct impact on quality, i.e. the definition of food fraud. It was also underlined the need to discuss about markets and instruments that contribute to achieving a well-functioning market. It was also mentioned the possibility and the need to talk about a definition of quality.

- It was also suggested the possibility to deal with the whole issue of integrated certification schemes of quality as we are moving to global market issues.

- The strategic agenda was approved and the chair concluded that the Advisory Group must work together to achieve future challenges and to have fruitful discussions in the coming meetings.

2. Regulation No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs:

-> State of play of:

a & b) Draft implementing act laying down rules for the application of Regulation and draft horizontal delegated act supplementing the Regulation:

The **COM Representative** explained that the delegated act was no longer a draft because it was adopted in December 2013. Now, European Parliament and Council can present their objection. This horizontal delegated regulation contains secondary legislation, which means legislation on less important aspects of the main regulation (basic act). It simplifies and clarifies rules to make it more simple for users. It focuses on rules on symbols, rules for sourcing of feed for PDOs and raw material for PGIs. All these rules are procedural.

The most important rule (Article 1 of Delegated Regulation) concerns the derogation to use animals feedstuffs sourced out of the geographical area in case of PDO of animal origin. Insofar as sourcing entirely from within the defined geographical area is not technically practicable, feed sourced from outside that area can be added, provided that the product quality or characteristic essentially due to the geographical environment are not affected. Feed sourced from outside the defined geographical area shall in no case exceed 50% of dry matter on annual basis.

Regarding amendments to a product specification, the text proposes new rules of application for amendment. In particular all the elements of the modification must be presented in the application for amendment. The European Commission has to assess such applications.

For minor amendments, if the Commission does not react in three months from the reception of the application, this amendment is automatically approved.

In the delegated act, the symbols are also established but also certain procedural rules regarding opposition and cancellation.

The provisions of both regulations are interlinked and both will come into force at the same time. The delegated act, adopted on 18th December, has already been notified to the European Parliament and Council. Both Institutions had until 19th February to express their objection or to ask for a prolongation of the deadline and the Council asked for a prolongation of the deadline. It means that the new deadline is 19th April.

If the deadline expires without Council and EP express their objection (or if they express their agreement even before the expiration of the deadline) the Delegated Regulation can be published. But, since the Delegated Regulation has to come into force and be applicable on the same day as the Implementing Regulation (all rules are interlinked) it is necessary to put the delegated Regulation in “stand by” and wait for the Implementing Regulation be ready to be published. So, after the OK from EP and Council to the Delegated Regulation the Commission will submit the draft Implementing Regulation to the opinion of the AGRI Quality Policy Committee and after the vote of the Committee the adoption procedure for the Implementing Regulation and the procedure to publish both acts will be carried out. Envisaged date for the publication June 2014.

- The **chair** thanked the Commission and the floor was open for questions/comments:

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** asked for more details and clarification regarding both texts. In particular, it was asked the difference between minor and big amendment. Regarding the feed, it was also asked if rules were going to apply to all products or only to new ones.

- The **COM Representative** explained that for the criteria differentiating major or minor amendments, the Regulation No 1151/2012 (article 53) has a list of modifications that should not be considered as minor. Anything that is not covered by that paragraph can be considered as minor. Regarding the standards on feed for PDOs of animal origin, the Commission has assumed that at present no PDO of animal origin exceeds the 50% of outsourced animal feeding. The purpose of the provision in Article 1 of the Delegated Regulation is to clarify a practice already ongoing. In practice nothing will change.

- Representative from **ORIGIN** stressed the importance of discussing documents and issues in advance. This document was never discussed before and it is a shame that now it can only be rejected. Regarding the implementing act, it seems to be an improvement in relation to the use of logos but they have some comments. Clarification was asked to the Commission regarding the consideration of small packages and black and white labelling. Regarding the feed, the threshold was not questioned but it was stressed that this kind of derogations can have a risk and implications for the quality of the products.

- Representative from **CELCAA** stressed, as previous speakers, that the Advisory Group was not able to participate. It was underlined that the task of the Advisory groups is to make sure that everybody can participate in the discussions. If the delegated act was adopted on 18th December, it means that several discussions took place before and the Advisory Group was never informed before. Regarding the derogation on the sourcing of feed, clarification was asked.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** also asked clarification regarding the derogation in the case of feed. It was stressed that the provision was rather vague and it could have some implications for the quality of agricultural products.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the regulation says that 100% of the feed must come from the area. Nevertheless, technically speaking, in some cases it is not possible to have all the feed from the area. That is the reason for the derogation set out in Article 1 of the Delegated Regulation. Regarding the comments that stress that such a rule could lead to low the requirements, the Commission explained that it is allowed to import feed from outside the area only if, and insofar, it is technically impossible to find it inside the area and only if the link is maintained. Operators will have access to the derogation if it can be proof, i.e. if only 80% of the feed can be sourced from within the geographical area, only 20% can be imported. The Commission is not trying to devalue the PDOs or PGIs. The idea is to clarify the flexibility that already exists.

Regarding the objection to the symbol, the COM Representative stressed that the symbol has taken a central importance of the new regulation. Products already packaged and placed on the market may remain on the market until the stocks are exhausted. The Commission Regulation does not remove white and black symbols, but the use of logos in black and white is limited. Preference is given to the version in colors to make easier for the consumers to recognize it. It was also explained that there is a derogation for very small packages regarding the symbol.

On the procedure and deadline, the Commission had the power to adopt the delegated act and they did it in December. The implementing act will be adopted and voted by the Committee once all the legal procedure of the delegated act is done.

- Representative from **CELCAA** underlined some situations where the sourcing of feed will change depending on situations that cannot be anticipated, i.e. aflatoxins that will reduce the potential of that area to produce food/feed. It was proposed that control bodies could adopt specific indications in certain situations.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** asked if these provisions on feed were already part of previous rules or if they were new. It was also requested clarification regarding the proof of origin and the link with regulation No 1169/2011. It was also stressed that it would be good if the Advisory group could receive more information in advance.

- Representative from **ORIGIN** asked for clarification on the issue of small packaging. In particular to the provision that says that symbols can be smaller in the case of small packaging because there is not specific definition of small size.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the threshold of at least 50% of feed internally sourced was set out to have at least a majority of feed coming from the area. To bear in mind the link must in any event maintained. If the link is not maintained even importing 20% of feed from outside the area is not allowed. - Representative from **ORIGIN** clarified that there are situations where the product can have a limit to the geographical area due to the feed.

- The **COM Representative** stressed that if you cannot have the feed from that area, the exception cannot go beyond the 50%. In case of extreme weather conditions, Member States can inform the Commission of some exceptional conditions that have to be certified. There are some emergency procedures. Regarding traceability, both texts reproduce exactly what it is in the current Regulation (nothing will change).

c) Draft delegated act with regard to conditions of use of the optional quality term "mountain product"

- The Representative of the **European Commission** informed about the state of play of the delegated act on application of the optional quality term "mountain product" (article 31 of Regulation 1151/2012). Following different discussions mainly on the requirements for feedstuffs and processing, the Advisory Group was informed that outstanding points were solved before Christmas. The draft delegated act has been notified to Geneva (WTO – Technical barriers to trade) for comments. The notification was made on 16th December with a period of 60 days for comments. The deadline has expired and the Commission has not received any comments. The text, as notified, was presented to the Advisory Group.

In article 31 of Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012, it is stipulated that the term shall only be used to describe products intended for human consumption listed in Annex I to the Treaty in respect of which both the raw materials and the feedstuffs for farm animals come essentially from mountain areas and the processing also takes place in mountain areas. The Commission was delegated the power to work on derogations and this is what is done through this delegated act:

- Requirements for feedstuffs: the new version of the draft lays down that in the case of feedstuffs that cannot be produced in mountain areas, they shall not exceed:

- 50% (expressed as a percentage of dry matter)
- 40% in the case of ruminants
- 75% as regards pigs

In the case of products of beekeeping, the term may be applied if the bees have collected the nectar and the pollen only in mountain areas.

Regarding the ingredients, products not listed in Annex I to the Treaty may come from outside mountain areas, provided that they do not represent more than 50% of the total weight of the ingredients.

- Processing: The Commission was empowered to adopt derogations of the basic regulation and in the draft it is also proposed derogations on processing. Several processing operations, namely production of milk and milk products, slaughtering of animals, deboning of carcasses and pressing of olive oil can take place outside mountain areas provided that the distance from the mountain area in question does not exceed 30 Km. In the case of the derogation for milk and milk products, Member States have flexibility. They may reduce the 30 Km distance or not apply this derogation at all.

Regarding procedural issues, the Commission was waiting for the result of the TBT consultation. The consultation period of 60 days has now expired and no comment has been received.

The delegated act will be adopted in the coming days and notified to the European Parliament and the Council. There will be two months for scrutiny. EP and Council can also ask for a prolongation of this period.

- The **chair** thanked and congratulated the COM Representative for the presentation and the floor was open for eventual questions/comments:

- Representative from **Euromontana** stressed that certain requests had been taken partly on board in the last version of the draft. The new derogation for the feed for pigs and the processing of milk were welcomed. Regarding the derogation for processing operations for the production of milk and milk products in processing facilities in place on 3 January 2013, it was stressed that there could be some distortions because certain new companies will receive milk from mountain companies that are within the area. In the market, it may have a boomerang effect.

- Representative from **CELCAA** thanked the Commission and asked to receive the presentation. It was asked clarification regarding the implementation of the delegated act in practice and the derogation on processing of milk. If a product is labelled as mountain product in one country and is then exported to other country that does not have the same derogation, it was asked if such product could be put on the market with a label "mountain product".

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** congratulated the Commission for the improvement of the draft. It was also stressed the importance of enhancing agricultural production in mountain areas. Clarification was asked about the subsidiarity given to Member States regarding the derogation of 30 Km for processing operations in the case of milk and milk products. Is it possible for Member States to adopt different derogations depending on the type of a dairy product?

- Representative from **ORIGIN** requested more information regarding the procedure and deadlines.

- The **COM Representative** explained that in the case of processing of milk and dairy products the specific concerns have to be discussed at national level. Member States have to deal with this in order to adapt themselves to the economic situation and milk market situation in particular. The aim is to enhance the milk production in the mountain areas with certain flexibility that was considered necessary. Regarding the possibility to have different derogations depending on the dairy product, the text foresees a derogation for the whole group "milk and milk products". Nevertheless, this is a question to be made to the legal services.

Regarding the derogations decided and applied in one Member State in line with the EU rules, it was clarified that no other Member State is entitled to refuse the labelling "mountain product" if the product is sold in that country, even if that other Member State does not apply the same derogations.

On the procedure and the deadline, the current European Parliament will deal with this delegated act. It will be notified to the EP and Council in the coming days and there will be two months for scrutiny. A prolongation of this period can be requested.

-> Presentation and next steps (discussions with the European Parliament and the Council,

timetable...) of:

d) Report on the case for an optional quality term 'product of island farming'

The **COM Representative** explained that according to Article 32 of the Quality Regulation, in December 2013 the Commission transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the case for a new term "product of island farming". Pursuant to this article, the term may only be used to identify the products intended for human consumption that are listed in Annex I to the Treaty the raw materials of which come from islands.

In order to prepare such a report, the Commission consulted stakeholders and Member States and organized a Workshop in Seville.

The main objective of the report was to (1) examine the socio economic characteristics and specificities of island farming, (2) review existing labelling schemes of island products in EU and (3) reflect on the merits of establishing an optional quality term for island products.'

The report points out that the characteristics of island products are normally due to factors present on a given island. Since EU islands tend to be very different, it seems practically impossible to establish specific characteristics common for all island products.

The report also identifies existing EU schemes and national measures that relate to island products but rather indirectly. No legal instrument at EU or national level is specifically devoted to protecting products originating from islands or island farming as such .

As regards the exiting labelling practices, the report underlines that the geographical names refer to the name of the specific island and there are only few examples of the use of the generic term 'island products'.

In the conclusions, the Commission presents the advantages and drawbacks of reserving an optional quality term 'product of island farming' at EU level.

It considers that such term could be adequate for some small scale producers not benefiting from a sufficient scale to use other marketing tools such as PDOs or PGIs (i.e. Some archipelagos in Finland, Croatia or Denmark). It would be a voluntary instrument imposing a relatively low burden on operators. The term could also add value to some island farming products if Member States ensure it is integrated with or linked to other support measures.

Regarding the drawbacks, there is a risk of diluting existing initiatives and penalizing producers already engaged in quality schemes by placing them in competition. Since the majority of island products are sold locally or within the Member State to which the island belongs, the possibility to regulate labelling claims at Member State level should be considered. Finally, it is also argued that structural problems faced by island might be better addressed by the existing structural instruments.

With regards to the state of play, the report has formally been presented to the Council (SCA meeting) on 3th February. The Greek Presidency will further discuss it with Member States and will provide the Commission with some feedback.

The **chair** thanked the COM Representative and opened the floor for questions/comments. As there were no specific comments from the audience, the chair decided to close this agenda point.

e) Report on the case for a local farming and direct sales labelling scheme:

The **COM Representative** explained that the report on the case for a local farming and direct sales labelling scheme was also adopted in December 2013 and sent to the European Parliament and the Council.

It was already presented by the Commissioner Ciołos to the Member States in December. The Commission has decided not to come out with a legal text or proposal taking into account that it was judged to be more opportune to present first the report and then if it is necessary, to present a legal text at a later stage.

The aim of the report was to examine the socio economic situation and the need for a new labelling scheme. The report is accompanied by a Commission staff working document. It was decided that the report which has to be short and concise will be more focused on the possibility to have a new labelling scheme.

- *Situation with regard to local farming and direct sales*: several discussions took place in the expert group ‘from my farm’ regarding the definitions to be used. For the purpose of the report, local farming means farm products to be sold in an area close to the farm of production. Short food supply chains means sales from a farmer to a consumer with a reduced number of intermediaries.

On the other hand, direct sales means no intermediaries between farmers and consumers; and local food systems refer to production, processing, trading and consumption of food occurring in a relatively small geographical area.

It has not been possible to provide a uniform definition of the term ‘local area’ as there is no agreement on the distance that can vary between 20 and 100 km from the point of production.

- *Socio-economic importance of local farming and direct sales*: On average, about 15% of farms sell more than 50% of their production directly to consumers. Nevertheless, there are very big differences among Member States. When consumers are analysed, there is a high interest in buying local food. In particular, there are four major ingredients why local products are bought: price, origin, identity of the producer and nature of the supply chain (fairness).

The report also shows the importance of multiplication effects on the local community and highlights the issue of social capital and cooperation.

Local farming and direct sales can also have certain positive effects for the environment. Regarding energy consumption and GHG emissions, the report looks into the impact of the transport component and other elements such as direct and indirect energy use or carbon footprint of a consumer who travels to a farm shop to purchase products. With regard to food waste, there is not a specific research that could really focus on food waste in connection to short supply chains. It is difficult to draw concrete conclusion on this issue.

- *Existing labelling schemes across Member States*: the report has also looked at labels in the Member States. There is a large variety of schemes throughout the EU. Most of them are made up of sales in the proximity of the production site. Labels and logos are most likely to be used by schemes that have been established for a longer period or by larger regional initiatives. The report concludes that at EU level there are several policy tools. Nevertheless, they are not applied consistently.

In the report, it is also asked whether there is a case for a new labelling scheme. Labels are useful to protect products from imitations, inform consumers and reduce misleading of consumers. However, there is a risk of confusion about logo and labelling interpretation and possible cost for producers.

Regarding local farming and direct sales, the report shows some challenges that include the need to facilitate access to investment and knowledge, to allow for participation in public procurement and to adapt the hygiene rules.

If a new scheme is created, it should be simple, voluntary and there should be low cost involved on this. It was also suggested that a specific labelling scheme would only be beneficial if integrated with or linked to other measures through rural development.

Other question raised during the preparation of the report was how to insure co-existence with other national and local labelling systems as there are many schemes. It is clear that this is an issue to consider.

Regarding the development of a possible optional quality term, the report explains that it could be an effective tool to communicate products' value added and inform consumers about the characteristics of the food supply chain.

In conclusion, there is a demand for a genuine farm product sold in short food supply chains, as well as the need to identify it and there are also large differences among Member States with regard to development of direct sales and application of policy instruments.

A possible new label should be simple and unburdensome for producers while at the same time being controllable and ensuring sufficient credibility for consumers.

The report tries to analyse consumer's demand and expectations but still certain issues to look at. A new labelling scheme should be credible for consumers and helpful to reduce confusion. It cannot be limited to direct sales and it has to be integrated with other measures at EU level.

Regarding the procedure, the COM representative explained that they are still waiting for feedback from the European Parliament and the Council. Based on that they will see whether going for a new label is an option or not.

- The **chairman** thanked the Commission and said that several issues are still open. First of all, it is not clear if the initiative is just limited to direct sales but also to short food supply chains. The floor was given to members for comments/questions.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** thanked the Commission. It was mentioned that the report is still a bit ambiguous and not very clear how a logo can be introduced to describe short food supply chains. It was also stressed the problem of coexistence between a possible new EU tool and national schemes already in place. If a new tool is created it has to ensure advantages and take all the elements into consideration. It has to encourage local work and local farming. It is also very important to define terms in order to have clearer indications, i.e. the definition of "local". Direct sales refer to the link between farmers and consumers and a labelling system is a reductive approach.

- Representative from **Eurogroup for animals** stressed that the presentation left out animal welfare. It should be highlighted because short food supply chains limit live animal transport as much as they can.

- Representative from **CELCAA** stressed that after the horse meat scandal, several companies decided to shorten their supply chains. It was requested clarification regarding the definition of short food supply chains. If the supplier is in a different country, is it still possible to consider this as a short food supply chain?

- Representative from **ECUC** stressed the importance of promoting this kind of farming that offers a lot of opportunities such as more biodiversity or less use of pesticides. Consumers are asking to value and to support it, nevertheless, labelling would mean more cost. Regarding the sales to school canteens, something could be done to use the opportunities of direct sales and it needs further reflection.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** congratulated the Commission and stressed the gaps in terms of economic analysis. Many small producers are part of short food supply chains because the unbalanced food chain does not let them to be more competitive. Such questions in the discussion with European Parliament and Council deserve full consideration. This needs further debate. Other important aspect is the coexistence with national systems. In Spain, some systems have been set up in Cataluña. It was also mentioned that issue of definitions and reaching a compromise on definitions and certain limits are important in order to agree upon a system.

- Representative from **AREPO** recalled that the Advisory Group has been consulted several times. There was also a small expert group discussion these issues. The Commission has not taken any position on the issue of having a new label because this is very complex and now during the discussion with the European Parliament and Council, it still needs further reflection.

- The **chair** also reminded the discussions of the expert group "product from my farm".

- Representative from **IFOAM** stressed the advantages and benefits for the environment found in the report. There are other areas to explore and to be more effective and get more benefits for the environment.

- A representative from **Copa-Cogeca** thanked the Commission for the presentation and the report and underlined that the report concluded that something should be done. An optional quality term can be an alternative to a new labelling scheme. Some issues such as rural development support are to be dealt at Member State level.

- The **COM Representative** stressed that they do not insist on any option, they have just provided more information. Now, it needs further discussion with the European Parliament and the Council. The aim of the report is also to encourage a broader debate which might take place. The report addressed the case of a new labelling scheme but then, it is more complex and covers many issues. The report goes beyond the issue of a label and the discussion should be broad and cover all relevant and related issues.

3. Regulation No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers:

a) State of play of the reports on :

- the mandatory indication of the country of origin or place of provenance of other meats, milk and milk used as an ingredient in dairy products

Following the mandate of article 26.5 of the Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, the Commission has to submit a report to the European Parliament and Council on the mandatory indication of country of origin or place of provenance of milk, milk used as an ingredient in dairy products and types of meat other than beef, sheep and goat, poultry and pig.

In order to draft this report, DG AGRI has called upon Wageningen University to carry out a Study to collect data for the Commission to analyse this possibility.

Now, they are revising the interest for consumers to be informed regarding these products and a chapter where the Consultant analyses the supply chain characteristics. There will be 9 countries (9 case studies) visited by the Consultant. Among these countries, the seven main producing countries, meaning, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, UK, Rumania and Poland.

For mid-April, the Consultant will have a first draft to see all the main elements of the supply dairy chains. In the case of other meats, they will concentrate on horse and rabbit meat.

The mandate is to analyse possible mandatory origin labelling and one of the options considered is also the status quo, meaning no mandatory labelling. Regarding the way to indicate origin, place of milking and last processing step of the milk will be analysed. It can vary for the different dairy products.

After this first part, for the end of May/beginning of June, there will be a second part where the Consultant will concentrate on the costs and benefits and the impact on the internal market and on international trade.

A workshop on origin labelling for milk and milk used as an ingredient was organised with participants from the dairy supply chain.

During this workshop, the first scenario discussed was non labelling Vs labelling EU/non-EU and the second labelling EU/non-EU Vs labelling at Member State level. The idea is to finish in July. Once the report is done, it will be sent to the European Parliament and Council for discussion.

- The **chair** thanked the Commission and opened the floor for questions/comments.

- Representative from **CELCAA** asked the COM Representative if the dairy products to be analysed were already decided. Supply chains may vary depending on the product.

- Representative from **Consumers** asked about the Eurobarometer survey that was mentioned during the last meeting of the Advisory Group.

- The **COM Representative** explained that the terms of reference were already published some months ago with all the information about the study. Regarding the selection of dairy products, all the products that contain milk used as an ingredient must be covered by the Study. They will focus on some key products and the results will be extrapolated to products similar to them. During the workshop, drinking milk, butter, cream, yoghurt and cheese were mentioned.

Regarding the results of the Eurobarometer Survey, they will be published quite soon as they already have it in English and French. Questions are regarding the need for consumers to be informed and the willingness to pay more to get this extra information. Probably at the end of February, beginning of March, the results will be available.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** explained that one of the countries that has been chosen is Italy. In Italy, it is mandatory at national level to indicate where the animal was milked. It was underlined that it did not have any impact on the cost and the prices.

- Representative from **CELCAA** asked for the criteria for the assessment of the costs and impact. In article 26.7 of the regulation there is a list of criteria that must be taken into account. The impact on the internal market must also be taken into account.

- The **COM Representative** explained that they already know that some Member States have already regulated it and this is going to be analysed in the framework of the report. The risk to build artificial barriers will be analysed and the report will deal with this.

- Representative from **IFOAM** reminded that in the case of fruit and vegetables we already have mandatory rules that do not represent a barrier for the internal market.

- The **COM Representative** concluded that the report will analyse the increase of costs, the potential benefits and the possible impact on the internal market and on international trade.

- Unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food (article 26.5):

- The **COM representative (DG SANCO)** provided an update on the other study ongoing regarding mandatory origin labelling. This one will be focused on unprocessed foods, single ingredient products and ingredients that represent more than 50 % of a food. As for the other report, the deadline for the Commission is the end of 2014.

A Consultant has also been selected for the study and it will not overlap with other studies as they will not deal with dairy products. The idea is to cover all but focusing on specific products.

- In the case of unprocessed food, they will focus on wheat flour, rice and fresh cut fruits and vegetables.

- For the category of single ingredient products, sugar, vegetable oils, frozen vegetables will be the products targeted.

- The last category of ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food, products selected have been orange juice, tomato puree (Passata) and wheat flour in bread.

The study will analyse the need for consumers to be informed and the information that consumers are interested on when they buy the products. The economic and social impact will also be analysed.

A workshop with stakeholders was also organised on 10th February regarding this study. During the workshop different options were examined: 1) EU/non-EU origin, 2) Member State or third country origin and 3) other geographical entities as place of provenance. Supply chain characteristics and different elements such as sourcing practices, frequency of change in the mix of suppliers were also discussed.

- The **chair** thanked the Commission and opened the floor for questions/comments.

- Representative from **ORIGIN** made reference to the different levels of detail and explained that in some cases, if we go to regional levels, it must be confusing for PDOs and PGIs. It is important to pay special attention to this and not to create a distortion for products already labelled.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** stressed the same comment regarding the geographical level of detail and asked for clarification regarding the case studies. It was also asked why flour had been considered as an unprocessed food.

- Representative from **FoodDrinkEurope** explained a pilot project that had been done in Italy some years ago to see if origin could have an impact on the price of milk. It could not be proof. The price did not even increase and the consumption of fresh milk decreased so they were not able to connect it.

- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** stressed that consumers want to know place of farming and place of processing. It was asked if Commission was going to take into account both terms.

- The **COM Representative** explained that flour was chosen because it was a very interesting case for the unprocessed category but also in the case of ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food. The Commission is analysing all the options, i.e. in the case of canned tomatoes, it will be discussed if origin refers to the place where the product is made, processed or where the tomatoes have been harvested.

- Representative from **The Brewers of Europe** welcomed that the beer is not considered as a single ingredient product. It was asked if water was going to be considered as an ingredient.

b) Update on the WTO dispute with the United States on country of origin labelling (COOL) (written contribution)

- The **Chair** explained that regarding this point of the agenda there was a written contribution.

4. Presentation of the new CAP focused on "quality related issues": inclusion of the support measures for quality schemes in the national programs and its implementation

Regarding this point, the **COM Representative** explained that there is an Advisory Group on Rural Development. There is no new information to be provided at the moment.

5. State of play of the discussions on the European Commission's proposal on official controls (review of Regulation (EC) № 882/2004) and the link to quality certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs:

- The **COM Representative** explained that the proposal for a Regulation was currently under discussion at the European Parliament and Council.

Rules on official controls to verify compliance with PDOs/PGIs/TSGs rules are currently in two sets of legislation: in Regulation No 882/2004 on official controls and in Regulation No 1151/2012 (cross-references to general principles and rules of Regulation No 882/2004 and specific rules for PDOs, PGIs and TSGs). This generated some unclarities and duplications and the main goal of the new proposal is to clarify the legal framework.

As regards official controls, all provisions are now in the Regulation proposal on official controls. In particular, its Article 1 specifies that PDOs, PGIs and TSGs are in the scope of the Regulation proposal. Article 23 of the proposal allows the Commission to establish sector specific official control rules. Articles 25 to 32 address the delegation of tasks to delegated bodies and official certification is regulated in Articles 85 to 90.

The proposal also exempts from mandatory official control fees controls carried out to verify compliance with PDOs, PGIs and TSGs rules.

Regarding the timeline, it is foreseen that the European Parliament will vote in Plenary during mid-April. The rapporteur in COM-ENVI has been Mr Pirillo (S&D, IT). The opinion in COM-AGRI has been done by Mrs Reimers (ALDE, DE).

At the level of the Council, MS are still discussing the proposal. Several Member States do not agree with the empowerment in Article 23. Other Member States are asking to include also optional quality terms in the scope of the proposal (currently, controls on optional quality terms rules are not in the scope of the Regulation proposal).

- The **chair** thanked the COM Representative and the floor was open for questions/comments:
- Representative from **Euromontana** asked for clarification regarding the status of optional quality terms. It was requested more information about their controls, ways to control them, costs and responsibilities.
- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** also asked for clarification regarding these controls.
- Representative from **CELCAA** requested more information on the delegated bodies for the controls and possible coordination in order to avoid duplication of controls.
- The **COM Representative** explained that the proposal does not include official controls to verify compliance with rules on optional quality terms. Articles in Regulation No 1151/2012 on optional quality terms are not modified by the proposal. Nevertheless, some Member States want to include optional quality terms. COM also explained that the competent authorities of the Member States are responsible for the planning of their controls taking into account several criteria (identified risks, etc.) and that, according to Article 8 of the proposal, official controls, be they delegated to bodies or not, shall be performed as much as possible in a manner that minimizes the burden on operators.

6. AOB

- During AOB, the **COM Representative** explained that in December 2013, a decision was published setting up a framework for civil dialogue that will replace the current Advisory Groups from July 2014. At that moment, it was not possible to provide more information. There will be a call for interest.
- Several representatives of the Advisory Group asked for the point 4 of the Agenda on the inclusion of the support measures for quality schemes in the national programs. The point was not finally presented but several questions/comments were made.
- Representative from **AREPO** asked a question regarding Rural Development and the assistance to producers with fixed costs in relation to promotion.
- The **COM Representative** explained that this question regarding cost eligibility had to be made to the Rural Development Unit.
- Representative from **Copa-Cogeca** stressed the importance of discussing specific issues for quality in the Advisory Group. A meeting of the Advisory Group on Rural Development will never go into the details of the measure to implement article 16 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs. The Advisory Group on quality of agriculture production has to be part of that discussion.
- Representative from **BEUC** asked if the Commission was going to follow the resolution made by the European Parliament regarding origin labelling for fresh meat.
- The **chair** reminded the importance of being informed about other files where the Group needs to be updated on the discussion focusing on quality related issues.
- The **Commission** explained that in order to avoid duplication of discussions in several Advisory Groups, some points cannot not be accepted. Regarding the motion for a resolution from the European Parliament on the new origin labelling rules for fresh meat, the COM Representative informed that the Commission took note.
- The **Chair** closed the meeting and thanked the representatives of the Commission, the interpreters and all participants for their contribution to the meeting.

Disclaimer

"The opinions expressed in this report represent the point of view of the meeting participants from agriculturally related NGOs at community level. These opinions cannot, under any circumstances, be attributed to the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use which might be made of the here above information."