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Brussels, 27th February 2012

MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF THE COPA-COGECA AD-HOC WORKING PARTY ON THE PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS ON 6TH DECEMBER 2011

PRESENT: Jochum, Arnandis, Ciambriello, Quadro, Valentini, Fedi, Coppola, Ferreira, Pavao, Kicinski, Wierzbicki, Martin, Cerud, van Ginkel

COMMISSION: Barth

SECRETARIAT: Benites

- 1. Adoption of the agenda and the minutes from the previous meeting** on 2nd March 2011 [PPA(11)2232]. Both were adopted.
- 2. Election of the Vice-Chair of the ad hoc Working Party on the Promotion of Agricultural Products**

The Secretariat was informed of the candidacy of Mr Jerzy Wierzbicki for the position of Vice-Chair of the Working Party. Mr Wierzbicki was elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Party on the Promotion of Agricultural Products

3.1 Reform of the promotion scheme for agricultural products

The Chairman informed the members of the Working Party that Mr Barth, Head of Unit for Promotion at the Commission, would be arriving towards the end of the meeting to answer any questions which may emerge during the meeting.

The Secretariat outlined Copa-Cogeca's reaction to the Green Paper on the promotion of agricultural products. The Secretariat then presented the results of the consultation, based on the summary report of the Green Paper consultation from November 2011.

The Chairman of the Working Party commented in particular on the results of question 17 of the report, on brands, classified amongst the least important elements. It was stated that the Commission should be asked whether they would weight the responses to the consultation when making use of them. The delegate representing Coldiretti regretted that the Commission had only received 170 responses, with few national authorities or consumers having contributed. He felt that the Green Paper on quality and the Green Paper on promotion should have been released together. The Dutch delegate regretted that the Green Paper focused on the classic forms of promotion, whereas his organisation were putting in place new marketing and promotion strategies using new media. He felt that new tools of this kind should be introduced as part of the promotion scheme. The Chairman stated that for new starters, one-year programmes could be introduced for the beneficiaries to prove that they are able to use the budget allocated to their organisation. This would also be important in view of improving the use of the budget and ensuring a high and solid budget is provided. At that time, only 80% was being made use of.

The Secretariat presented the developments in the Quality Package, in particular regarding "Products of my Farm". The Polish delegate emphasised that within Rural Development, it was currently possible for producer groups to receive support for information and promotion activities targeting products covered by food quality schemes. In his opinion, it was important for this measure to be maintained, regardless of its regulatory framework,

otherwise producers would be required to cover a significant share of the costs for such activities. The Chairman stated that the Commission was currently trying to reorganise all promotion measures and that this issue should be raised with them.

3.2 Information and discussion on approved and rejected promotion programmes for agricultural products on the internal market

The Secretariat informed members of the EU promotion programmes for agricultural products approved by the Commission in July 2011.

3.3 Information on programmes adopted in the light of the E.coli crisis

Due to a lack of time, this item could not be discussed.

3.4 Information on programmes for third-countries adopted in 2011

The Secretariat informed members of the promotion programmes for agricultural products for third-countries, approved by the Commission in November 2011.

Due to a lack of time, the other agenda items would be discussed at the Advisory Group.

3.9 AOB: Discussion on the promotion reform with the Head of Unit for DG AGRI, Unit D4

The Chairman of the Working Party asked Mr Barth how the responses to the consultation on the Green Paper on promotion would be used. The Polish delegate then asked about the promotion of quality schemes under Rural Development.

Mr Barth informed members that an external agency had evaluated the contributions to the consultation. The Commission did not refer to how the summary report was drafted. When evaluating the responses, the external agency treated each response with equal importance. They were therefore not weighted. Nevertheless, the Commission would not only be taking the summary report into account, but also the contributions sent in beforehand in particular by European associations. Regarding quality, there was agreement on promoting quality as a means of drawing attention to it. The reform would be targeting quality policy and everything linked to quality. Mr Barth gave a presentation on the number of approved/rejected programmes since 2006, indicating that the number of approved programmes as compared to the number of rejected programmes had been considerably higher in 2011 (67% in 2011). On the issue of new media, a study had revealed that 70% of new-media advertising had flopped. Further thinking would be needed to understand how to better target messages so that tax-payers money is used as best as possible. The delegate representing Confcooperative highlighted the need for greater flexibility for multi-annual programmes. Mr Barth replied, stating that they were aware of this concern and understood that it was difficult to project three years into the future. Brands were recognised as an important avenue to explore with respect to third countries.

The Chairman of the Working Party mentioned the importance of considering the strategic orientation of the agricultural sector in view of replacing the outdated annexes and to better target actions and audiences. For example, it would be important not to saturate an already overloaded market. The delegate representing Coldiretti stated that in general, all agricultural products deserved to be promoted and that it was necessary to update the list of products that could benefit from promotion activities. However, it was important that the list should not be opened up to novelty products, where the agricultural content is minimal and the majority is of industrial origin. Such products should not be financed by public funds.