

Draft Report Advisory Group on Promotion

21 March 2012

1. Welcome by Chairman.
2. Welcome by the Commission: The objective of the meeting is to keep the group informed about the on-going reform of the promotion policy (including the current impact assessment) and to work together on a few important questions of this reform through the three working groups which will take place in the afternoon.
3. The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting are approved.
4. **Information on aligning the promotion Regulation (EC) No 3/2008 to the Lisbon Treaty:** The Commission informs participants that there is no news on this proposal of regulation that has been submitted from the Commission to the Council and discussed in November. No further progress has been made for the moment.
5. **Information on own initiative programmes of the Commission in 2012:** This year, the Commissioner is planning two visits, one in Japan and another in Korea in the same mission. The visit will be focused on Japan. The visit to Japan will take place on the third week of October, and the Commissioner will be accompanied by 30 representatives from business, focusing on the promotion of products carrying geographical indications and organic farming products. The activities will allow for networking with business and potential buyers, but also with the media. The visit to Korea is more of a continuation of last year's campaign. There will also be participation at a food exhibition: Food China in Shanghai on 14-16 November, with a stand of about 180 square meters, 20 producers to exhibit their products, also accompanying activities with the press and buyers. Soon an invitation will be sent for participation. On what regards the future, there will be an action in Vietnam in April 2013.

Delegates' discussion: Delegates highlight the importance of these markets, Japan and Korea, to give a good image of EU products. There are questions about who will be part of the Commissioner's delegation to Japan, and the Commission replies that they are trying to get a good sample of products and also geographical coverage. For China (Shanghai), registrations will be open soon, probably after the Eastern holidays and there will be time until end of June to register, after that, only new participants if there are cancellations. The Commission will make sure that this group receives all the necessary information so that interested participants can be suggested. The business delegation accompanying the Commission to Japan & Korea, will be composed of 30 representatives of GI products from the food, wine and spirits sectors, and organic products. To the question on whether trade agreements and SPS have been taken into account, the Commission replies affirmatively, and confirms that part of the meetings of the official delegation are on SPS. Delegates highlight the importance of taking into account the fruit & vegetable sector since the Japanese market is very important, with products such as citrus that can already access, but with other products, such as kiwis and table grapes, that are still trying to open the market.

6. **Feedback from the Copa-Cogeca, FoodDrinkEurope, Celcaa seminar held on 14 March 2012:** COPA COGECA gives the feedback, stating that unfortunately for reasons of timing the meeting could not be held closer to this meeting. Nevertheless a good 100 people attended. Co-organised by the three umbrella organisations. The focus was on practical issues, giving information on the regime, in attendance of the upcoming Commission communication. However the focus was not so much on the political aspects but on the practical aspects of implementing the regime. There were a number of broad ranging presentations and particular examples. There is a lot happening on the ground, but situations vary widely. There was a small part of the seminar dedicated to policy where DG AGRI made a presentation on the state of play, and then there was a statement by the three organisations summarising their common position. Further, there were contributions on running programmes. In the afternoon there were three working groups. The objective was to embark in a discussion on how the strategic approach could be achieved, find initial indications on how strategic discussion might be shaped. A reflection paper might be drafted and sent to the Commission which might feed in on the strategy of promotion.

Delegates' discussion: Participants highlight the need to reflect on how to better use the new media, particularly to reach young people. On the workshop on animal products, it came out the need to have more synergies with national programmes and promotion, and highlight that farmers should be proud, and the nutritional values of the products. The Commission also found the seminar very useful, with plenty of feedback coming back to them, which highlights the importance of having this type of exchanges more often. Delegates mention that one result of the seminar is that the more details there are in the handbook/manual, the more complicated it becomes to make programmes at the administrative level so there is clear need for simplification in this sense.

7. **AOB:**

- Simplification :

Delegates come out with a few questions on this. Particularly, delegates wonder if there is a real need to sending to the Commission all the copies of documents for the approval and running of programmes, and whether it would not be possible to use more electronic formats. Delegates mention that it is also a question of the level of detail that needs to be provided. In the future it should be a clear strategy and then more discretion on the details, leave it at the level of the member States. Also it is noted that some administrative simplification has indeed been done between the Commission and the Member States, but unfortunately, the proposing organisation still has the same obligations.

The Commission agrees that this could be revised to a certain point.

- VAT

There is a recurrent problem which is the VAT (which is not reimbursable) and the intervention of a consultancy agency even when the proposing agency has all the experience required. The Commission explained that the question of the VAT is something outside the promotion unit and all the expenditure are submitted to the same rules and do not depend of this regime in particular.

- Execution of a programme by the proposing organisation

Delegates expressed their willingness to allow the proposing organisations to execute more than 50% of the actions on their own.

Participants highlight the disparities of treatment between an execution by the proposing organisation on its own and through an executive agency because, in the first case, it is not possible to apply the fee for management (13 – 15%).

The Commission replies saying that it is possible for a proposing organisation to receive reimbursement of these costs if justified in a time sheet.

8. **Reform of the promotion regime: state of play, calendar and organisation, external evaluation, impact assessment process** – On what refers to the state of play and calendar of the reform, the Commission informs participants that after the public consultation that took place over the summer last year, the Commission is working on an impact assessment and on the Communication (leading to legislative proposals by the end of the year) that will be published on 30 March, and which will be the starting point of an interinstitutional discussion with Council, Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR). There is an “experts group of simplification” (with MS) discussing Simplification within CAP and on the 27 March they will discuss the simplification of the promotion policy. The Commission clarifies that, after the publication of the Green paper, three positions have already been received from the institutions, all but not the Parliament. The European Parliament has already appointed Bové MEP as their rapporteur for this dossier, but no discussions have yet taking place, it will start after the communication.

On what refers to the external evaluation, the Commission informs participants that this evaluation was done in 2011 by an external evaluator. There were three main themes in the analysis: The relevance and effectiveness of the promotion policy, Management of programmes, and Consistency and complementarity with other initiatives (CAP, national, private). In the context of reform, apart from making the analysis, the consultant was asked to give some recommendations (which are purely the recommendations of the consultant and not those of the Commission) – these can be seen in the presentation.

Finally, on what refers to the impact analysis, the Commission informs participants that this is an accompanying report when new legislation is to be proposed. For promotion, the work for analysis has started: definition of the problem and the definition of the objectives of the reform were presented.

Delegates’ discussion:

- Coherence

Synergies between EU, national and private level should be more highlighted. It is questioned if the Commission envisages to merge the different CAP promotion regimes.

The Commission agrees and confirms that they are working on coherence, but that the answers could go either way, from status quo to merge of all the systems.

- More added value

Commission clarifies that the goal is to reach more added value with actions through the future promotion scheme but not to be understood as a willingness to promote only "added value agricultural products". To give an example, the Commission confirms that the diversity of EU agricultural products or multi-country programmes are part of this added value.

- Generic promotion vs private or national promotion

Delegates expressed concerns that the Commission wants to put everything under one umbrella, but this umbrella is getting bigger and bigger, and not everything applies to everything. For example, the idea of preferring third country programmes doesn't fit flowers, which need the internal market. There is a risk that a one framework won't be able to cover everything. An improvement would be more personal contacts between the Commission and the project leaders, instead of doing everything on paper. Also, one thing is the content and spirit of the EU products, and another thing is what goes in labels, where more and more there is a request of national origin. Need for balance that the initiatives in third countries between the EU spirit and labels.

The Commission confirms that the question of generic versus private/national, this is something that clearly came out of the green paper, and it will be analysed and discussed.

9. **Participation in three different workshops, each of them dedicated to specific questions related to the impact assessment:** The Commission introduces the workshops, which have two common questions and one specific question each.
10. **Conclusions by the three rapporteurs:** Following the discussions in each of the workshops, the rapporteurs have prepared a presentation with their conclusions that are presented to the plenary. The presentations are available on CIRCA.
11. **Conclusion by the Commission:** The Commission thanked the work of the participants in the workshops and considers it a very positive exercise that will certainly help in the reform.

Next meeting is in principle fixed for 11 December 2012, but the Commission agrees to consider an earlier meeting with the group if this would fit better with the necessary feedback within the reform.

Participants are thanked and the meeting is adjourned.

Disclaimer

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