

***DRAFT***

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COPA-COGECA  
WORKING PARTY ON FORESTRY ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY  
2014**

**PRESENT:** Valero, Hakkarainen, Pinaudeau, Matousek, Spickova, Mastrogiovanni,  
Basto, Ackzell, Hoebarth, Fleming, Miera, Verset, Töke, Guisado, Calado

**SECRETARIAT:** Neagu

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

**Item 1 and 2: adoption of the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting**

→ The Working Party (WP) met under the Chairmanship of Mr Valero and adopted the agenda [FP\(13\)9631 \(rev.1\)](#) and the minutes [FP\(13\)6011 \(rev.1\)](#) of the previous meeting.

**Item 3: new rural development measures for 2014-2020 and their inclusion in national/regional rural development programmes**

→ The Chairman stated that this topic had also been addressed in previous meetings. He highlighted that RD funding was the only financial support available for the sector. In many countries and regions (e.g. Galicia), when agri-environmental measures were enacted, they merely focussed on agriculture and forestry fell by the wayside.

He encouraged members to share their experiences on this issue from their own country or region.

The Secretariat gave a presentation providing more details on forestry measures under the RD programme.

Members stressed that active forest management of forest resources was crucial and this should form part of the national strategy (e.g. Italy). They also mentioned their concerns on the transition period and extending projects that had already been approved. It was vital to guarantee continuity and all possible action should be undertaken to safeguard the day-to-day work of SFM. In Sweden, support for the forestry sector would stop from 2014. One of the measures that had been used a lot was knowledge transfer to mobilise more wood and maintain the sector's vitality. In Finland, national funds were used to support the sector. The national programme was currently being prepared in Austria and certain changes were already perceptible – forestry was now part of a broader programme, whereas there had previously only been a programme for forestry and water. Measures such as knowledge transfer, cooperation and continuing Natura 2000 could be very efficient. In the Czech Republic, it seemed that all forestry measures would be included in the national programme. In Ireland, there was not enough money to attract forest owners to use the measures and Natura 2000 was used to protect existing forests. In Portugal, it was possible to apply the old rules with new money for the transition period. All measures would be included in the next programming period.

Members commented that it was sometimes difficult to access funds, hence co-financing was exceedingly important. Productivity had to be guaranteed and competitiveness increased.

The Chairman concluded that discussions on this topic needed to continue during the next meeting. Should these measures be inefficient, we would need to inform the Commission.

#### **Item 4: the new EU Forest Strategy – conclusions of the workshop on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013 and EU SFM criteria**

→ The Chairman presented the conclusions of the workshop on the Forest Strategy that had been organised on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2013. He stressed that the Forest Strategy was crucial for the sector. Several important topics had been discussed during the workshop, such as SFM criteria and the cascade use principle.

→ The Chairman questioned what new SFM criteria could be introduced. He considered that this could create confusion and that it would not be possible to evaluate what had been achieved before such criteria reached the end of their validity period.

Members stressed that the workshop was a very good experience, that it was held at the opportune moment to send a signal to the Commission and that the results were good. The opinion of the sector on all of these issues was very important.

SFM criteria remained a very controversial topic, as it was unclear how they would be implemented: tools, legislation, being forced to establish a new forestry law, etc. Accepting these new criteria would mean questioning the existing criteria. Members also mentioned that it was unacceptable for someone to tell them what to do with their products. The cost aspect was also significant, as both MSs and forest owners did not want to see an increase in costs. This was a complex matter and many countries were concerned about what would happen next.

Members stressed that resource efficiency should be the principle to promote and that the cascade use principle should remain a tool.

The Chairman concluded that discussions on these issues were of the utmost importance for the Working Party and we should therefore play an active role in the debate.

#### **Item 5: EU action on large carnivores**

→ The Chairman presented the state of play of the debate on large carnivores. He had participated in the meetings organised by the Commission. He explained that the entire sector was involved: NGOs, MSs, hunting organisations, etc. and that the aim was to create a platform for stakeholders. Two points needed to be addressed on the possibilities of achieving cohabitation and the conditions to sign a manifesto to join the platform.

Legislation on habitats and hunting needed to be revised, as the current situation was not the same as 20 years ago. Forest owners were of the opinion that we could not accept further restrictions and our Working Party should be involved in the discussions.

Members of the Working Party underscored that flexibility was essential and solutions were needed based on what had happened in the past.

#### **Item 6: guidance on Natura 2000 and forests**

→ The Chairman informed the Working Party that the draft guidance was now more favourable to forest owners. In the initial text, non-intervention areas constituted a very important part. However, certain issues remained unresolved concerning some of the terms used, i.e. intensive forest. Members advocated paying close attention to the terminology that was sometimes employed by NGOs on wood mobilisation.

Members also stressed that the main problem occurred when restrictions were imposed on managing forests (e.g. Ireland). In Romania, Natura 2000 covered a large protected area (50%) and compensation should be granted to forest owners. In Finland, Natura 2000 areas also fell under nature protection laws. In Austria, Natura 2000 was covered by national law and no protection was accepted without compensation.

The Chairman concluded that it was vital to find solutions to tackle the restrictions that we were facing.

## **Item 7: presentation of the state of play of discussions in the European Parliament and in the Council on the new plant health law and official controls**

→ The Secretariat explained that the Council would begin discussions to amend the Commission's proposal on this issue. It was therefore very important to contact national experts on the points that we would like to raise.

The final vote in the EP was scheduled in COMAGRI in February and trialogue discussions with the Council were planned under the Italian Presidency.

On plant health, the EP and Council would like to have a list of quality and quarantine pests (with delegated acts for the latter). The Secretariat was in favour of a quick procedure to list/delisted pests, hence a more dynamic approach. As regards funding plant health damage caused by an outbreak of a pest (solidarity fund), limited money would be available (only in 2018/2019) for farmers and forest owners. We had attempted to include this under the expenditure proposal (in place from 2014) and the Commission agreed to compensate losses, although they required more experiences on how, which principles and which criteria.

Members stressed the importance of this topic and that the differences between agriculture and forestry needed to be taken into account.

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