



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

Directorate D
SG.D.3 – Resource Efficiency

Brussels, 15 May 2017

SI(2017) 224

NOTE TO MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

**Subject: Meeting of the Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA)
Brussels, 15 May 2017 - Summary record**

The SCA proceedings were rather brief with only several technical items on the agenda. The most political issue was raised under AOB by ES delegation (supported by many others), questioning the work of the Commission-driven REFIT platform on the potential CAP reform. A number of delegations considered this as an unwelcome intrusion into the established platforms and procedures and insisted on closer involvement of the SCA in this work. Regarding the review of the Organic Farming Regulation, the Presidency announced they will go for their last try for an agreement on 31 May (trilogue no. 18).

[signed]

Further information: [REDACTED]

1. Adoption of the agenda

I

**2. Summary record of the 1549th meeting of the SCA
8496/17 CRS CSA 9**

Summary record adopted.

II

**3. 15th General Assembly of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV)
on 2 June 2017 in Sofia**
= Preparation of the EU position on OIV draft resolutions for the 15th General Assembly

In order to prepare for the 15th OIV General Assembly (Sofia, Bulgaria, 2 June 2017), the delegations took note of the outcome of the Working Party meeting held on 3 May 2017 (doc. 8608/17) and unanimously approved the Commission Proposal for a Council Decision establishing the EU position to be adopted at the OIV General Assembly and on the minor amendments proposed by the Presidency. The Commission also supported the amendments.

Reporting: [REDACTED], DG AGRI, Unit G.2 Tel.: [REDACTED]

4. **Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on organic production and labelling of organic products, amending Regulation (EU) No XXX/XXX of the European Parliament and of the Council [Official controls Regulation] and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 (First reading)**
Interinstitutional file: 2014/0100 (COD)
– Debriefing of the last trilogue

The Presidency debriefed delegations on the Trilogue that took place on 3 May and informed delegations on the next steps. In this context a new compromise text will be distributed to the delegations at latest on Thursday 18 May. This text would be reviewed during the SCA of 29 May in view of a new mandate for the Trilogue of 31 May.

Reporting: [REDACTED], DG AGRI, Unit B.4 Tel.: [REDACTED]

5. **Report from the Commission to the Council 2011-2015 report on the implementation of the long-term national aid scheme for agriculture in the northern regions of Finland and Sweden pursuant to Commission Decisions 2009/3067 and 2010/6050**
– Information from the Commission
8477/17 AGRI 215 AGRILEG 90 AGRIFIN 43

The Commission (Mario Milouchev) gave a presentation of the EC report to the Council on the implementation of the long term national aid scheme for agriculture in the northern regions of Finland and Sweden.

The FI and SE delegations welcomed the report which they found mirroring the northern most agricultural situation in a good way. The SE delegation mentioned difficulty to maintain open landscapes, despite supports received from EU. The FR delegation also highlighted the vital importance of such a system of support in areas affected by strong climate constraints. The FR delegation also supported environmental aspects and emphasised that the existence of such a system should be seen positively during the discussion on future of CAP. In this context the PL delegation also mentioned the need for production payments and the need to enable voluntary coupled support post 2020.

In its concluding remarks, the Commission underlined that the Nordic Aid support only concerns areas north of 62nd parallel affected by special climate conditions. The Commission also reminded that this scheme doesn't allow for increasing the production, is based on the Accession Treaty and is not traditional state aid but based on primary law.

The SCA has taken note of the report from the Commission and of the comments of the delegations.

Reporting: MILOUCHEV Mario, DG AGRI, Directorate E, Tel.: [REDACTED]

Any other business

6. a) Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL fixing the adjustment rate provided for in Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 for direct payments in respect of the calendar year 2017

Interinstitutional file: 2017/0068 (COD)

– Information from the Presidency on the procedure
7881/17 AGRI 181 AGRIFIN 36 CODEC 527

In order to support the agricultural sector in case of major crises affecting the agricultural production or distribution, a reserve for crises should be established by applying, at the beginning of each year, a reduction to direct payments through a financial discipline mechanism which is provided for in Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of 17 December 2013 of the EP of the Council. The first budgetary estimates for direct payments and market related expenditure showed that the net balance available for EAGF expenditure for 2018 is not likely to be exceeded and thus there is no need for further financial discipline.

On the basis of the above, the Commission presents a proposal for setting the adjustment rate for direct payments in respect of calendar year 2017, which in accordance with Article 26(3) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 is to be adopted by the EP and the Council by 30 June 2017. If this adjustment rate has not been set by 30 June 2017, pursuant to the same Article the Commission will set that rate.

The Presidency informed the SCA about the Parliament's decision to let the Commission set this year's adjustment rate for financial discipline by means of an Implementing regulation.

Reporting: [REDACTED], DG AGRI, Unit I.5 Tel.: [REDACTED]

6. b) Current situation of the REFIT Platform and agricultural matters

– Information from the Commission, requested by the Spanish delegation

Upon request from the Spanish delegation, the Commission provided an update on the REFIT Platform activities regarding agricultural matters.

ES introduced the point, expressing its concern on the REFIT platform not operating in accordance with its original mandate as discussions on agriculture should be dealt within the relevant platform (namely the SCA).

AT, FR EL, DK, IE, SK, CZ, PL, supported the ES position, highlighting the need for more transparency, better coordination (harmonisation) and further simplification efforts. FR and PL were especially interested in how the Commission will take account of the REFIT platform in the context of the future CAP post 2020 discussions.

The Commission recalled that the Platform constitutes an expert group (and not a Council formation) which is purely advisory, with no (legal) link with the SCA. The Commission explained the rationale, mandate and functioning of the REFIT Platform. It also recalled the transparent nature of the Platform (all documents being public, with a website open to all) and that coordination within the Commission was indeed ensured

and that it was for Member States to ensure coordination between their membership in the REFIT Platform, departments of agriculture and relevant Council formations. The presidency took note of the information provided by the Commission on the ongoing activities as well as the views expressed by the delegations. The SCA announced it will return to this issue in due time.

Reporting: [REDACTED], *DG AGRI, Unit I.5 Tel.:* [REDACTED]

7. Organisation of future work

The next SCA meeting will take place on 22 **May** in Malta. The provisional agenda includes Omnibus, more particularly the EP amendments which are not part of the Council text.

The informal AGRIFISH Council is also foreseen for 23 **May in Malta**. In this context a discussion paper on Climate change and water resources in the EU has been distributed.

The subsequent SCA will take place on 29 May (afternoon only) with the aim to obtain a revised mandate for the last Trilogue on organic foreseen on 31 May 2017.

Reporting: [REDACTED], *DG AGRI, Unit I.5 Tel.:* [REDACTED]