



Meeting report

GROW - FoodDrinkEurope, 12 June 2019

TP met FoodDrinkEurope (FDE), at their request, to discuss priorities and ideas for the next five years of the Commission work in the food and drink sector.

FDE briefly presented their organisation and their members. They stated that the food and drink manufacturing industry is the largest sector in the EU in terms of jobs and turnover. They consider DG GROW to be the key DG for their portfolio and they are very keen to maintain a very close cooperation.

TP asked whether the FDE has an opinion regarding the future of the High Level Forum for the Better Functioning Food Supply Chain (HLF), emphasising that the voice of stakeholders will be important in the reflections on potential follow-up to the Forum.

FDE stated their overall support for the HLF, stressing the importance they give to horizontal subject such as global competitiveness of the industry, combining sustainability with growth, and the impact of new technologies on the food business in the EU.

FDE also stressed opportunities and challenges linked to the plastic strategy and that the single market is and will remain the key topic for their organisation.

FDE praised GROW's work on trade negotiations for processed agricultural products, and explained that the food industry in Europe has transitioned significantly over the last decades from an defensive one to offensive. In this context, Brexit was mentioned and the FDE stressed the need to maintain a close proximity of the UK to single market. According to FDE, food industry might be one of the most impacted by any kind of potential future barriers in trade between UK and the EU.

FDE gave the background on the history of the Supply Chain initiative (SCI) and its current challenges. They specifically stated that the retailers' buying alliances should sign up to the SCI, as they often take advantage of their superior bargaining power.

FDE invited TP to intervene in their upcoming event '*Food and Farming Festival*' on 16 October 2019. DG Timo Pesonen tentatively accepted, with a disclaimer that the plans might shift, depending on the agenda of the new Commission.

Participants:

GROW: Director-General Timo Pesonen (TP), [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]), [REDACTED]
([REDACTED]), [REDACTED] ([REDACTED])

FDE: [REDACTED] ([REDACTED] FDE), [REDACTED], [REDACTED]