



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate H. Sustainability and Quality of agriculture and rural development
The Director

Brussels, 22nd March 2012
AGRI H3/SC/sm agri.ddg3.h.3(2012)326725

**Invitation to the Sub-group meeting on Food of the
Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production**

**The Sub-group meeting on Food will take place on the
24th, 25th and 26th of April 2012, and will start on the 24th at 12h00 in room AMDL,
CHARLEMAGNE building, rue de la Loi 170, B-1040 BRUSSELS**

Dear Expert,

I have the honour to invite you, in agreement with the Chair, to attend the Subgroup meeting on Organic Food which will take place from the 24th until the 26th of April 2012 in Brussels at the following address:

- 24 & 25 April 2012 – room AMDL, CHARLEMAGNE building, rue de la Loi 170, B-1040 BRUSSELS;
- 26 April 2012 – room B – 11th floor in DG AGRI, rue de la Loi 130, B-1000 BRUSSELS

I remind you that as regards to Sodium Carbonate your attendance will be limited to the provision of information and not to the discussion/drafting of the conclusions of the report. This decision has been taken by the Chair in consultation with the Permanent Group and in agreement with the Secretariat as mentioned in Chapter 5.1.2 of the Rules of procedure of the Group, and it is based on the declaration of interest dated 14 December 2011.

As you will see in the enclosed draft agenda agreed with the Chair, the meeting will be devoted to finalise the draft report answering to the specific questions in the term of reference of the relevant mandate.

The Commission shall reimburse travel and, where appropriate, subsistence expenses for members and experts in connection with group's activities in accordance with the Commission's rules on the compensation of external experts. No remuneration shall be paid for the services rendered under this Decision. Meeting expenses are reimbursed within the limit of the annual budget allocated to the Group by the responsible Commission services.

You will find the instructions regarding the travel reimbursement/booking in the enclosures. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that if exceptionally, for reasons beyond the control of experts, seats have to be booked in business class and/or higher rate, the expert must produce with the ticket supporting evidence from the travel agency and complete the enclosed "justification" form.

The form of "application for reimbursement" needs to be filled in and signed at each meeting. You will receive this document in a folder during the meeting and you will have to complete it with the type and class of travel used, the time of travel and the amount paid. Please do not forget to sign it.

You are kindly requested to bring to each meeting the invoices or online bookings with you as well as the printout of the electronic reservation and the boarding pass or train tickets. The documents provided must show the class of travel used, the time of arrival and the amount paid.

For the members of the Permanent Group present during the previous meetings, please bring your personal label with you.

In particular, the members selected from the pool list and those of the Permanent Group who could not participate to the previous meetings are kindly asked to fill in the "financial identification" and the "legal entity" forms and to bring them at the meeting in order to be completed by the Secretariat during the meeting or to send them before the meeting to the following address:

European Commission – DG AGRI
Unit H3 – Organic farming
Rue de la Loi 130 – 3/224 a
B-1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

These forms can be found at the following addresses:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/info_contract/ftiers_en.htm?submenuheader=0

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/info_contract/legal_entities_en.htm?submenuheader=0

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that your name, and not the name of the Institution/Company for which you work, should be mentioned in those documents.

Please do not use old forms, the above mentioned ones are the only forms accepted by the Commission.

In addition, please be sure to provide a copy of your passport or ID at the time of the meeting.

All the experts are reminded that they already gave their consent to the processing of personal data with the specific privacy statement in Annex IV B of their application to the Call for applications 2009/C 308/10.

I would like to stress that according to Article 16.2 of Rules of procedure of the Group, members of the Permanent Group and Sub-groups, and the external experts, **shall declare any specific interest which might be considered prejudicial to their independence in relation to the items on the agenda of each meeting**. This information should, preferably, be provided before each meeting. For those of you that did not provide an updating of their declaration of interest you will find indications on how to declare any interest under Chapter 5.3 of the Rules of procedure of the Group.

According to Article 19.2 of the Rules of procedure of the Group, members of the Permanent Group or Sub-groups or external experts or observers shall sign a declaration that they will comply with the rules of confidentiality set out in paragraph 1, where necessary.


In addition, according to Article 4.7 of Commission Decision 2009/427/EC members appointed in a personal capacity shall each year sign an undertaking to act in the public interest.

Please remember to send the original of the declaration of interest, the declaration of confidentiality and the undertaking to act in the public interest duly signed by post to the following address:

**European Commission – DG AGRI
Unit H3 – Organic farming
Rue de la Loi 130 – 3/224 a
B-1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM**

Experts must provide the Secretariat with the documents necessary for their reimbursement, as required by the financial rules applicable in the Commission bringing them at the meeting, or by letter, fax or e-mail postmarked or dated no later than 30 calendar days after the final day of the meeting.

Yours sincerely,



María Ángeles BENÍTEZ SALAS

- Annexes:
- Draft agenda
 - Mandate
 - Instructions on reimbursement
 - Justification form
 - DoI form
 - Confidentiality
 - Undertaking to act in the public interest

Sub-group meeting of EGTOP on Food 24-26 April 2012

DRAFT AGENDA 24 April 2012

1. Introduction: 12:00 – 13:30

- Declaration of interests
 - Specific
- Declaration of Confidentiality related to this meeting
- Declaration of commitment
- Adoption of the agenda

2. Reports and working methods: 13:30 – 13:45

- Procedures
- Reports structure and content
- Term of reference

3. Any other business: 13:45 – 14:00

4. Discussion on the items into the terms of reference: 14:00 – 18:00

DRAFT AGENDA 25 April 2012

- 5. Discussion on the items into the terms of reference: 9:00 – 12:45**
 - Lunch break
- 6. Preparation of the draft report: 13:45 – 18:00**

DRAFT AGENDA 26 April 2012

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|---|--------------------------|
| 7. Preparation of the draft report: | 9:00 – 12:45 |
| • Lunch break | |
|
8. Preparation of the draft report and conclusions |
13:45 – 17:00 |

Expert Group for Technical Advice on Organic Production

Mandate for technical advice on organic food

1. Background

In recent years, several Member States have submitted dossiers under the second subparagraph of Article 21(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 concerning the possible inclusion of a number of substances in Annex VIII to Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008, or more generally, on their compliance with the above-mentioned legislation. In relation to substances and products for use in the production of processed organic food, France made a new request in 2011 concerning **Carnauba and bees wax**. In addition, France introduced also a request for **Steviol glycosides**. In the same year, Germany applied for **Thiamin hydrochloride** and **Diammonium hydrogen phosphate** for the fermentation of organically produced fruit wines and meads. In 2010 Germany submitted a dossier on **Sodium carbonate** and Spain on **Ion exchange and adsorption resins** while in 2008 Germany presented a dossier on the possible use of **Wood fibres**. Several requests from private companies and some information received from the Netherlands concerning the use of **Ozone**, made it necessary to assess the possible use of this substance on fruit and/or vegetables after the harvest.

It also became clear that Member States need to be provided with a template to help them prepare a complete technical dossier.

2. Terms of reference

- a) In the light of the most recent technical and scientific information available to the experts, the Group is requested to answer the following question:

Is the use of the following substances/techniques:

- **Carnauba wax** food additive
- **Bees wax** food additive
- **E 960, steviol glycosides** food additive
- **Sodium carbonate** processing aid
- **Ion exchange and adsorption resins** processing aid
- **Wood fibres** processing aid
- **Thiamin hydrochloride** processing aid (fruit wines and meads)
- **Diammonium hydrogen phosphate** processing aid (fruit wines and meads)

in line with the objectives, criteria and principles as well as the general rules laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and can they therefore be authorised in organic production under the EU legislation?

In preparing its final report, the Group may also evaluate if the use of **Ozone** as post-harvest treatment of plant products, are in line with the objectives, criteria and principles as well as the general rules laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. In addition, the Group may also suggest amendments to the current list in Annex VIII and consider possible alternatives to the substances in question and/or review the specific conditions for the use of the substances

listed therein including the grouping in animal and/or plant products. Any such proposal(s) should be accompanied by a brief explanation of the reasons.

- b) The Group is also requested to draft the template for the dossier mentioned in the second subparagraph of Article 21 (2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 in relation to food additives and/or processing aids.

3. Deadline

The deadline for adoption of the final report is 21 June 2012.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPERT'S EXPENSES



This information sheet is a summary of the Rule* on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by people from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity.

WHO?

Who is entitled to a reimbursement of expert's expenses?

- anyone from outside the Commission who is invited to give a specific professional opinion in a committee, an expert group or by personal invitation, wherever the location of the meeting;
- anyone responsible for accompanying a disabled person who has been invited by the Commission to attend a meeting in an expert capacity.

Experts may be private-sector experts (representing the civil society) or government experts (representing a public authority of a Member State).

WHAT?

Unless stated otherwise in the letter of invitation and the request to organise the meeting, private-sector experts shall be entitled to a daily allowance for each day of the meeting and, where appropriate, an accommodation allowance, on condition that they declare on their honour that they are not receiving a similar allowance or similar allowances from the same institution or another Community institution for the same visit.

Government experts shall receive a daily allowance for each day of the meeting and, where appropriate, an accommodation allowance, provided that provision for this is made in the rules of procedure of the committee or expert group and on condition that they declare on their honour that they are not receiving a similar allowance or similar allowances from their own administration for the same visit.

Travel expenses

All experts shall be entitled to the reimbursement of their travel expenses from the place specified in their invitation to the place of the meeting. This travel must be organised on the basis of the most appropriate means of transport and trying to benefit from the most economical travel rates.

The services in charge of reimbursements shall have the right to carry out any checks that might be needed and to request any proof from the expert required for this purpose. They shall also have the right, where it appears to be justified, to restrict reimbursement to the rates normally applied to the usual journey from the expert's place of work or residence to the meeting place. So please do be careful when organising your trip.

As a general rule, means of transport are:

- first-class rail travel for journeys less than 400 km (one way);
- economy class air travel for distances of more than 400 km. Business class is allowed for a flight of 4 hours or more without stopovers;
- private car. The travel shall be reimbursed at the same rate as the first-class rail ticket, or by default at the rate of 0.23 € per km.



Travel expenses shall be reimbursed on presentation of **ORIGINAL** supporting documents:

- tickets and invoices;
- in the case of online bookings, the printout of the electronic reservation;
- boarding cards for the outward journey.

The documents supplied must show the class of travel used, the time of travel and the amount paid.

► Taxi fares shall not be reimbursed.

The Commission shall not be liable for any material, non-material or physical damage suffered by invited experts or those responsible for accompanying a disabled expert in the course of their journey to or stay in the place where the meeting is held, unless such harm is directly attributable to the Commission. In particular, invited experts who use their own means of transport for travelling to such meetings shall be entirely liable for any accidents that they might cause.

Daily allowance

The **daily allowance** is a flat rate. It covers all meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.), as well as travel and accident insurance. It amounts to 92 € per day of meeting.

If the distance between the place of departure cited in the invitation (be it your private or professional address) is 100 km or less from the place where the meeting is held, the daily allowance shall be reduced by 50%. You shall then only receive 46 € per day of meeting.



Accommodation allowance



If you have to spend one or more nights at the place where the meeting is held because the times of meetings are incompatible with the times of flights or trains, you shall also be entitled to an accommodation allowance. This allowance shall be **100 € per night**. The number of nights may not exceed the number of meeting days + 1.

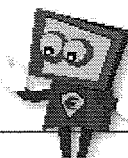
An additional accommodation allowance and/or daily allowance may, exceptionally, be paid if prolonging the stay would enable you to obtain a reduction in the cost of transport worth more than the amount of these allowances.

HOW?

You must provide the secretaries of the meeting with the documents necessary for their reimbursement, as required by the financial rules applicable in the Commission, by letter, fax or e-mail postmarked or dated no later than 30 calendar days after the final day of the meeting.

Beyond this deadline, the Commission is absolved from any obligation to reimburse travel expenses or pay any allowances.

Reimbursements shall be made in euros, where appropriate at the rate of exchange applying on the day of the meeting. All reimbursements shall be made to one and the same bank account. For government experts, reimbursements shall be paid into an account in the name of the Member State, one of its ministries or a public body.



JUSTIFICATION

I, the undersigned,

Surname:

First name:

declare having been forced to take an air-ticket in the business class (or discounted business) since (tick and complete relevant box):

- ☐ A ticket in the economy class was not available within the time assigned by the invitation convening the meeting of on (date):
- ☐ Other reason (to be specified):

Date: **Brussels, 24 April 2012**

Signature:

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Please highlight general and specific interests that could give rise to a conflict in the general operation of the Group as well as specific subject matters in relation to the items on the agenda of the meeting.

Please note that high quality technical/scientific expertise is by nature based on prior experience and therefore having an interest does not necessarily mean having a conflict of interest.

Title:

First Name:

Surname:

In accordance with the call for applications and Article 4(7) of Decision 2009/427/EC, I hereby notify the Commission that I currently have, or I have had in the past 5 years, the following interests¹ which might be considered prejudicial to my independence² working as member of the Permanent group/Sub-groups:

Direct interest [e.g. related to employment, contract work, financial interests (shares, stocks etc.)]:

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

¹ Links which could be considered 'interest' might include:

- one's job (university, institute, public service, enterprise)
- being a member of a board of directors, board of management or any other supervisory body within a company association, etc.
- having carried out scientific research or provided technical advice or an expert opinion at the request of a company, public service, etc.

² Please specify current and previous working periods paid or un-paid, part time or full-time employment, related to the interests declared.

Indirect interest [e.g. grants, sponsorship, or other kinds of benefits such as gifts or honorariums]:

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Interest deriving from the professional activities of the applicant's close family members:

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Any membership role or affiliation that you have in organisations/bodies/clubs with an interest in the work of the group:

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Organisation/Company/Entity
Date (month/year)
Activity

Other interests or facts that the undersigned considers pertinent for a member of an independent expert group:

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.....
.....

DECLARATIONS

I declare that the information provided above is true and complete.

I consent to the information provided above being published on the Internet site of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

I shall immediately and explicitly inform the Commission of any change with regard to my interests which could be prejudicial to my independence.

As a member appointed in a personal capacity I undertake to sign each year a declaration indicating the absence or existence of any interest which may undermine my objectivity.

I also undertake to declare at each meeting any specific interest which may be considered as prejudicial to my independence in relation to the items on the agenda.

Date: **24 April 2012**

Signature:

Version No....

DECLARATION CONCERNING CONFIDENTIALITY

I hereby declare that I am aware of my obligation to respect confidentiality. I know I am obliged not to divulge information acquired by participating in the deliberations of the Permanent Group and/or its Sub-group/s if, in the opinion of the Commission, that information relates to confidential matters in accordance with Article 5(4) of Decision 2009/427/EC.

Title:

First Name:

Surname:

Date: 24 April 2012

Signature:

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT

I hereby undertake to make all reasonable efforts to attend and participate regularly in the meetings of the Permanent Group for technical advice on organic production and/or its Sub-group/s and to act in the public interest independently of any external influence.

Title:

First Name:

Surname:

Date: 24 April 2012

Signature: