



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
Directorate C – CAP Strategic Plans I  
C.3 – Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia

Brussels, 10 October 2023  
AGRI (2023)

10/10/2023, 14:30-15:30, BERL, Brussels

## Minutes

**Participants: Janusz Wojciechowski – European Union  
Commissioner for Agriculture, Magdalena Majerczyk – Cabinet  
Expert, Joanna Stawowy – Member  
of Cabinet, Meeting between Mr J.  
Wojciechowski,  
MEP K. Jurgiel and the Polish Association of  
Tobacco Producers to discuss the future of tobacco production**

Krzysztof Jurgiel – Member of the European Parliament,  
of UNITAB, Polish Association of  
Tobacco Growers, – District Association of Tobacco Growers in  
Augustów

Note taking: – DG AGRI

The meeting took place at the request of the visitors, and was accepted by the Cabinet in line with the following considerations:

- The discussion centres around the CAP, which is the competence of the Commissioner for agriculture.

- The Commissioner will not engage in a discussion on non-portfolio matters, notably the revision of the Tobacco Directive.
- The meeting will be reported and documented.

**Minutes of the meeting:**

**1. Przemysław Noworyta – UNITAB Art.4.1(b) - privacy, responsible for the representation of tobacco growers, outlined the following points and requests:**

**Developments at international level**

- International institutions responsible for health protection in general promote solutions which may discriminate against farmers who grow tobacco. This is a legal agricultural activity under the current rules. The narrative that tobacco growers are degrading the environment, having a negative impact on the climate, employing minors or failing to comply with labour standards, does not apply to European growers.
- There is a lack of interest and research into lower harmfulness of certain products, which are an opportunity for European farmers. They are present on the market. However, there is a need for studies that could confirm or deny harm;
- A proposal that a representative of AGRI also participates in the delegation of the European Commission that will take part in the conference in Panama. The future of the sector depends on the decisions made there. Copa Cogeca supported this request to send an AGRI representative for the Conference;

**EU-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations**

- The European Commission is negotiating a bilateral agreement with India, where tobacco is one of the elements of the negotiations;
- India offers very cheap tobacco produced under conditions other than in Europe;
- Call for the exclusion of tobacco as a sensitive product from these negotiations;

**Process of revision of the Tobacco Directive**

- The amendments to the Tobacco Directive on which work is ongoing will have a direct impact on tobacco cultivation;
- The costs for small and medium-sized enterprises, such as tobacco growers, the so-called social costs of amendments to the Directive, should be estimated. As a result of changes a few years ago, cultivation fell by half, many people lost their jobs.
- A representative of AGRI should be involved;

**European tobacco-free generation**

UNITAB understands the European tobacco programme free generation by 2040. The question of whether the costs of support for loss-making growers are considered. Recent alternatives need to be explored in depth;

**2. Art.4.1(b) - privacy - Member of UNITAB, representing the District Association of Tobacco Growers in Augustów, raised the following issue:**

**Short tobacco cultivation characteristics in Poland**

- The soil class in the eastern part of the country favours tobacco cultivation, which gives a chance for small family farms (2 - 3 ha) to survive;
- Limiting the crop will reduce the means of subsistence;
- There are virtually no tobacco plant protection products. Cultivation requires a high share of manual work;

**3. Janusz Wojciechowski, EU Commissioner for Agriculture, mentioned:**

- The need to analyse the impact of legislative changes relating to tobacco cultivation;

**4. Krzysztof Jurgiel, Member of the European Parliament, stressed:**

- The most important issue is DG AGRI's involvement in the process of assessing the changes being developed, taking into account the situation of tobacco growers;

**Detailed information:**

- There are 4000 holdings in Poland dealing with this type of crop. Growth is gradually shrinking. Only those who have no other alternative or have invested large amounts of money, offering high quality and high profitability, are left on the market.
- Around the EU is cultivated 115 thousand tonnes of tobacco (2022). The figures for the current year will be similar. Detailed surrender data will be known after the sale period, in March next year. 25 thousand farms are cultivated, and the total area of crops is around 40 thousand ha. Italy has the largest area of crops, while Greece has the highest number of farms;
- Tobacco cultivation creates employment for 150 thousand people in the EU due to the labour intensity of production. Competitive farming methods have been developed in the EU;
- Growers in Europe match the quality of the raw material with alternative products. Reference is made to heated tobacco. They are leaders in the consumption of tobacco for these products. Factories with modern lines are being built in many countries, where this tobacco, including Polish, is used. This is a great opportunity for the industry;

**Next steps**

The Commissioner will ask Commission services information about the situation of farmers – tobacco growers in the context of legislative changes affecting tobacco production and use, notably possible CAP support for tobacco growers, evolution in the latest CAP reform.

In addition, precise information on the situation in the sector, on developments, of the type: number of farms or production area against the background of changes in cigarette production (dependency on imported tobacco).

Request also to check the context of the negotiation of trade agreement with India.

Art.4.1(b) - privacy