

MINUTES

Working Group 3: EU control and sanitary issues, consumer rules

Wednesday 18th of January 2017
14:30h – 16:00h

Business Europe – Europe Room, Av. de Cortenberg 168
1000 Brussels, Belgium

- **Welcome by the Chair and adoption of the agenda**

The Chair, Ms Agnes Lisik, welcomed attendees (ANNEX I) and vice-chairs and made a presentation about herself and the working methods for this WG, based on efficiency, on focusing and stressing the preparatory stage of the work, on being constructive and cooperative, on respecting all opinions and achieving a comprehensive advice rather than limiting it to the lowest common denominator. She encouraged pro-active participation and involvement in the group's work.

- **Presentation from the Chair of the draft work programme**

1. New developments on eco-labels for fish and aquaculture products, including the feasibility of a European eco-label for fishery and aquaculture products

2. Issues arising from the implementation of the new fish and aquaculture consumers labels

3. Voluntary allegations on fish products (like 'Fad free tuna', etc): validity, new developments

The Chair highlighted regarding these three first priorities laid down on the Work Programme that all of them concerned labelling issues.

The Commission stated that the eco-labelling is not in its view an issue that should be tackled individually anymore since all obligations have been completed by transmitting a report to the Council and the European Parliament, and it would be better to touch upon it within other domains related to consumers, unless the WG considers that specific issues in this area merit a special treatment of this type of voluntary information.

Two projects have recently started, one of them on an online system of commercial designation. Under the current CMO, commercial designations are established on a MS base, but it is important to facilitate the understanding for consumers on what are they purchase all around Europe. Before the end of the year the Commission hopes to have a better system online, though a beta version is ready to be explored by interested parties.

The second pilot project involves voluntary information and its role in the market, which is an area where monitoring action is needed to understand what allegations are made to consumers. This project will be also ready in 2017.

Regarding the « new fisheries and aquaculture consumer labels », the issue goes along with Food Information to consumers Regulation and the European labelling of fishery and aquaculture products.

FEAP stated that the aquaculture sector is not very positive regarding eco-labels and they would prefer to focus on promoting European products. Many imports of aquaculture products do not respect these rules and only the organic labels are mandatory.

4. Hygiene Regulation: implementation, updating, revision/ Contaminants legislation relevant for fish, aquaculture and fishery products

The Commission indicated that no revision plan is foreseen regarding the hygiene regulation, therefore within the MAC the focus would be on the implementation of the regulation from the markets point of view.

Regarding contaminants, there is an ongoing review performed by both the Commission and MS on the level of mercury in fisheries and aquaculture products. A decision will be issued second half of 2017. There is also a discussion ongoing regarding additive toxins.

As for food fraud, there is work ongoing in this area with MS on different aspects of fraud: labelling, colouring of tuna... this requires a close cooperation with the sector. The Commission stressed the particular relevance of this issue.

KFO asked whether it will be a full data analysis regarding the mercury levels on seafood, and regarding contamination of cadmium on products coming from China, KFO suggested working closely with the Commission on assessing how this affects the market. It was also suggested to have a presentation from the Commission on the state of play regarding the implementation of the hygiene regulation across the food sector.

FEDEPESCA stated the need to be careful on how to communicate any possible risk of consuming seafood to the general public.

Seafish mentioned the possibility for this WG to develop scientific reports and to ask MS and EC for funds. Mr Pastoor welcomed the idea although underlined that the current budget does not allow these expenses at the moment. Furthermore Seafish stressed the importance of better communicate at EU level the benefits of consuming fishery and aquaculture products.

5. Traceability of seafood products

The Chair explained that this is a very wide and interconnected subject. As an example, she briefly mentioned a study by Oceana which revealed significant weaknesses in seafood labelling in restaurants and catering in Brussels, which may jeopardize efforts to improve traceability along the whole supply chain. She also suggested involving consumer organisations in the MAC.

Mr Pierre Commere stressed that traceability is a mechanism to control each step of the food chain, and should not be confused with any other concept such as fraud. Traceability helps in detecting fraud.

WWF stressed that there is no relation between traceability and IUU fishing and the carding process should be tackled upon WG2.

Several members also stressed the important of the regulations on contaminants and the need to differentiate them from the hygienic regulation.

EMPA suggested to work together with the AAC on these issues.

It was stressed by WWF and the Commission the importance of the Control Regulation, particularly article 58, with regards to traceability.

The Commission also highlighted that Oceana was assessing labelling and not traceability, these two are different concepts.

Members pointed out the importance of a proper communication with the consumer and the need to work together with DG SANTE.

Spain informed attendees that there are several projects on traceability, including imports, for both aquaculture and fisheries. These projects will allow Spain to have a good knowledge on data from traceability from the very beginning of the value chain. Spain expressed their willing to make a presentation during the next WG3 on these issues.

6. Implementation of the Control Regulation when related to trade and markets

There has been work on going on the evaluation of the Control Regulation and by the end of February a report will be issued by the Commission on the results of this evaluation.

Final draft of the work programme

(Generalized after members' comments)

- **Working Group 3: EU control and sanitary issues, consumer rules**
 - ⇒ Labelling issues
 - ⇒ Voluntary information on fish products
 - ⇒ Hygiene Regulation implementation
 - ⇒ Relevant contaminants legislation; additives and residues issues
 - ⇒ Traceability of seafood products
 - ⇒ Food fraud
 - ⇒ Implementation of IUU Regulation-issues other than tackled by WG2
 - ⇒ Possible revision and implementation of the Control Regulation when related to trade and markets

ANNEX I

Attendees

Organisation	Representative
AIPCE-CEP	Marco Baldoli, Andrew Kuyk, Pierre Commere
ANFACO-CECOPECA	Jose Carlos Castro
CFFA- CAPE	Beatrice Gorez
Conxemar	Katarina Sipic, Marta Llopis
Copa-Cogeca	Pietro Gentiloni, Paolo Tiozzo
EBCD	Rocio Suarez, Despina Symons
ETF	Sammy Deburggraeve
EU IUU Coalition (Observer)	Victoria Mundy
EUfishmeal	Anne Mette Baek Jespersen
Eurocommerce	Adela Torres, Lorena Torrecillas
European Commission	Carola González Kessler, Chiara Bacci,
FEAP	Arnault Chaperon
FEDEPESCA	Maria Luisa Alvarez XXXX
Frucom	Anna Boulova
KFO	Sean O'Donoghue
LIFE	Claudia Orlandini, Brian O'Riordan
Living Sea	Erik Bjorn Olsen
Ministry of Poland Maritime Economy (Observer)	Monika Kołodziejczyk
Ministry of Poland Maritime Economy (Observer)	Piotr Słowik
MSC	Victor Simoncelli
Oceana	Agnes Lisik
OPEGUI	Miren Garmendia
OPP-07-Lugo	Jose Beltran
PSPR	Jarek Zielinski
Puerto de Celeiro OPP-77	Eduardo Míguez
Seafish	Cristina Fernandez
Secretariat	Sandra Sanmartín
Spain MAPAMA (Observer)	Carmen Rodriguez
Spanish Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries (Observer)	Aurora de Blas
Visfederatie	Guus Pastoor
VisNed	Pim Visser
WWF	Eszther Hidas
EMPA	Karine Berger