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Health and Food Safety Directorate General

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**Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed**  
**Section *Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture and Horticulture***  
**12 February 2020**

**CIRCABC Link:** <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/603394d7-79cd-4a83-b9b3-ca59d352f590>

<b>SUMMARY REPORT</b>
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**A.01 Update on a request to amend the list of species and certain botanical names listed in Directives 66/401/EEC, 2002/55/EC and 2002/57/EC.**

The Commission presented the document. Several Member States proposed some changes and additions to the draft. The Commission asked for written comments by 21 February 2020.

**A.02 Exchange of views on the preparations for a temporary experiment on organic varieties.**

The Commission presented the basic principles of the temporary experiment and the outcome of a first exchange with stakeholders and the first working group meeting with the Member States. Several Member States indicated their willingness to participate. An exchange on the development of adjusted DUS and VCU protocols for testing of organic varieties took place. The Commission highlighted that the experiment should address the needs of the organic sector and could be used to explore different possibilities for testing organic varieties. Further it was clarified that the use of adjusted DUS protocols can not lead to plant variety protection.

**A.03 Presentation of the results of the survey on biomolecular techniques used in the Member States.**

The Commission presented the outcome of the survey. The Member States welcomed the results. One Member State asked for clarification regarding the scope of the survey and intended changes in the legislation. The Commission clarified that as regards the legislative changes it should concern as first step the potential use of biomolecular techniques in seed certification. The Commission asked the Member States to review their answers by 26 February 2020. The Commission will prepare a document on changes for the introduction of biomolecular techniques for the next meeting.

**A.04 Exchange of views on questions in relation to the new Plant Health Regulation.**

The Commission presented the new Plant Health implementing acts which came into force on the 14 December 2019. The Commission provided answers to the questions of the Member States in respect to the new plant passport requirements, import

provisions, labelling issues in respect to different seed lots and the requirements for marketing small quantities of seed to non professional operators. It was further clarified that as regards seed lots imported with OECD Seed Scheme labels and having RNQP requirements in the EU, the plant passport needs to be added on the OECD Seed Scheme label for the marketing in the EU.

**A.05 Presentation of an annual report from France on the organisation of a temporary experiment under Commission Implementing Decision 2012/340/EU as regards field inspection under official supervision for basic seed and bred seed of generations prior to basic seed.**

The delegate from France presented the results of the temporary experiment on field inspection which was conducted until the end of 2019. The good results were welcomed as there is only a small deviation between official field inspection and field inspection under official supervision. However, only nine Member States have participated in the experiment. The Commission suggested to organise a new experiment in the area of field inspection as regards official check testing comparing a risk based approach with 5 % official check testing level. The Member States supported the new experiment.

**A.06 Presentation by the Commission of a report on the implementation of Commission Decision 2004/842/EC on the placing on the market of seed of not yet listed varieties.**

The Commission informed that it was not possible to prepare a report as several Member States had not sent to the Commission the complete information on granted authorisations to market not yet listed varieties. The Commission reminded the Member States to check and update their notifications by 26 February 2020. A full report will be presented in the next meeting.

**A.07 Presentation by the Commission of a report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) N° 217/2006 as regards the authorisation of Member States to permit temporarily the marketing of seed not satisfying the requirements in respect of the minimum germination.**

The Commission presented the results of the last two years. The Member States welcomed the results. Some Member States suggested to reduce the germination rate for soybean because of the recurring derogation requests due to supply difficulties over the past years. The Commission took note of the request.

**A.08 Update on EU equivalence requests.**

The Commission gave an overview of the different EU equivalence requests. The request of Ukraine is being treated; the internal adoption process is now ongoing and should be finalised during the Croatia Presidency. The request of Bolivia (cereals and fodder plants) is also ongoing and should be adopted in the second half of 2020. In India (request for cereals) an audit was conducted in December 2019. One Member State asked about EU equivalence with the United Kingdom. The Commission clarified that the future relationship between EU and the United Kingdom is under discussion.

**A.09 Update on the unique EU plant variety IT system.**

The Commission presented the status and next steps of the reactivated IT project that will group different databases for plant varieties (Frumatis, Variety Finder, Common Catalogue and Forematis) under the umbrella of one portal for the submission of Member States' notifications.

**A.10 Report on the VCU network.**

The Netherlands presented the results of the last VCU workshop. The focus lay on adjusted VCU testing for organic varieties. Switzerland invited the Member States for the next VCU workshop scheduled on 25-27 May 2020.

**A.11 Update on the approach to seed fraud.**

Postponed to the next meeting.

**A.12 Update on OECD Seed Scheme matters.**

The Commission presented a summary on the important technical issues of the last OECD Seed Schemes meeting of 30-31 January 2020 in Milan, Italy. The technical discussion on mixture of varieties and species, new seed production techniques, hemp seed issues, use of biomolecular techniques and digital technology have to be addressed in more detail.

**B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Directive correcting Implementing Directive 2019/990 amending Council Directive 2002/55/EC with regard to the list of genera and species in Article 2(1)(b).**

The Commission presented the draft and no further discussion was needed.

**Vote taken:** Favourable opinion.

**C.01 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation amending Commission Regulation (EC) No 637/2009 on rules as to the suitability of the denominations of varieties of agricultural plant species and vegetable species.**

The Commission presented an updated draft. Several Member States raised small comments and proposed changes to the current document. The Commission asked to provide written comments by 21 February 2020.

**M.01 ESCAA meeting in Sofia 10 -15 May 2020.**

The delegate from Bulgaria informed about the upcoming ESCAA meeting in Sofia 10 -15 May 2020 and invited all Member States to participate and to suggest topics for discussion.

**M.02 Farm to fork strategy and the role of the seed sector.**

A delegate asked about the Commission' farm to fork strategy and the role of the seed sector. The Commission informed that a presentation on the strategy will be given in a upcoming Council or PAFF meeting.

**M.03 Guidelines on providing reference material and control of maintenance of varieties.**

A delegate asked about the guidelines on providing reference material and control of maintenance of varieties which was agreed on in the form of a Commission Working Document in the PAFF meeting of 4 October 2019 and the further steps. The Commission clarified that it will see to it to formalise the document in the form of a Commission recommendation.

**M.04 Commission's Working Program for the PAFF meetings on seed and other plant propagating materials.**

A delegate asked about the Commission's Working Program for the PAFF meetings on seed and other plant propagating material and suggested several topics, in particular on fruit propagating material. The Commission will prepare a document for the next meeting.