



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

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**CORRECTED SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANTS, ANIMALS, FOOD AND FEED
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 18 JUNE 2015**

(Section Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture and Horticulture)

CIRCABC Link: <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/14b3586d-9038-4788-984b-3dc6b7fe51ea>

A.01 Presentation of a French report on the organisation of a temporary experiment regarding field inspection under official supervision for basic and bred seeds prior to basic seeds.

The delegate of France informed that they are in the process of collecting data from the Member States and a complete report will be presented in the next Committee meeting. Before the meeting an expert group meeting to discuss the results and the planning for the year 2016 will take place. The delegate from Germany informed that there has not been any interest to apply the possibility of field inspections under official supervision.

A.02 Presentation of a Portuguese report on the organisation of a temporary experiment providing for certain derogations for the marketing of seed mixtures intended for use as fodder plants.

The Portuguese delegate presented the report. As the temporary experiment will come to its end 31 May 2016 a follow-up to amend the list of plant species included in the Directive 66/401/EEC on marketing fodder plants was discussed. Several opinions were expressed. The Commission will analyse the situation in more detail.

A.03 Presentation of a report from the United Kingdom on the organisation of a temporary experiment providing for certain derogations for the marketing of populations of the plant species wheat, barley, oats and maize pursuant to Council Directive 66/402/EEC.

The delegate from the United Kingdom presented the first report on the application of the temporary experiment which has started or is about to start in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Some interest has also been shown in France.

A.04 Presentation of the results of a working group meeting on true potato seeds in view of the possible organisation of a temporary experiment.

The Commission presented the outcome of the first Expert Group Meeting on True Potato Seed. The experts agreed on the requirements for true potato seed, propagating material and hybrid tubers that need to be developed for a temporary experiment. Several smaller groups of experts are being organised to establish the detailed thresholds and other details. The next meeting of the working group will take place later in 2015. The Commission also informed that the Netherlands has submitted a Pest Risk Assessment to the Standing Committee for Plant Health which will be discussed in its meeting in 9 to 10 July 2015.

A.05 Exchange of views on the import requirements of standard vegetable seed from third countries.

The Commission presented a summary of the data provided by Member States on the import of vegetable standard seed from third countries. The Commission emphasized again that such imports require an equivalence decision. The data showed that such imports occur regularly for certain species such as beans and peas and that certain countries such as China and the United States are the most important and regular importers. Other species appear to be important more opportunistically from around 40 other third countries. The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, France and Poland stated that the data provided in fact referred (mostly) to bulk imports of seed as grown and not to standard seed. In view of establishing equivalence decisions in the future the Commission requested from Member States to provide by 31 July 2015 the third countries for which equivalence would need to be established.

A.06 Exchange of views on a possible revision of the Annexes of the vegetable Directives 2002/55/EC and 2008/72/EC.

The Commission presented the summary of Member States' proposals for possible revisions of the Annexes of Directives 2002/55/EC and 2008/72/EC. Seven Member States provided some suggestions. The conclusion was drawn that no immediate action needs to be taken in respect of such a revision.

A.07 Exchange of views on a Norwegian request to include *Brassica napus* L. var. *napobrassica* (rutabaga) under the scope of the Directive on the marketing of vegetable seed.

The Commission pointed out that rutabaga is listed in the fodder plant Directive 66/401/EEC for fodder use only. The use of varieties of this species for use as vegetable is not regulated and it is thus free for Norway to regulate such varieties nationally or not to regulate at all. The general principle for listing of plant species at the level of EU were recalled (i.e. marketing in more than two Member States, significant production area, significant marketing volume). Some Member States objected to list the same species in two Directives as this might create loopholes so that more stringent requirements from the fodder plant Directive can be avoided.

A.08 Follow-up on the issue of illegal seed imports from countries without equivalence.

The Commission recalled the issue of Eurostat data on the import of cereal, fodder grass and vegetable seeds from countries with no EU equivalence, which is a condition for imports into the EU. Further Eurostat data related to the year 2014 has been checked and the Commission has written to 11 Member States in order to get information on the control system which they have put in place in order to ensure compliance with the provision prohibiting such imports. The Commission presented a summary of the results. A preliminary assessment of the responses received so far (two Member States have not yet replied) underline the importance of customs authorities being involved in preventing imports of seeds for agricultural crops from third countries for which no EU equivalence has been established. Certain exceptions in EU legislation in relation to imports were discussed, such as imports for processing and packaging followed by re-export to third countries. Questions in relation to multiplication or test and trials in the EU or production under the control of an EU Member State in a third country were also raised. The Commission's intention is to further bilaterally clarify the situation with the concerned Member States (where needed) and seek legal clarification on the questions raised.

A.09 Follow-up on the issue of fraudulent official labels used for grass seed lots.

An update on the situation was given by the concerned Member States. A short discussion took place whether it would be beneficial to create a list of competent authorities in the Member States which are responsible for fraudulent practices. Portugal informed about seed lots being marketed with fraudulent French official labels. The two Member States will co-operate.

A.10 Update on ISTA issues.

The Commission informed that there is no new information from ISTA concerning the use of the term "accreditation".

A.11 Follow-up on the working group meeting on biochemical and molecular techniques.

A brief summary of the working group organised on 24 April 2015 on biochemical and molecular techniques was given by the Commission. An update regarding the discussion during the technical working group of the OECD Seed Scheme in 3 June 2015 was also presented.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Directive as regards the amendment of Annexes I and II of Council Directive 66/402/EEC on the marketing of cereal seed.

A vote will take place in the next Committee meeting as some Member States had not yet concluded their national consultation process. A short discussion took place in relation to the purity level of certified seed of barley hybrids. Some minor editorial changes were proposed.

Vote postponed

B.02 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Directive amending Directives 2003/90/EC and 2003/91/EC setting out implementing measures for the purposes of Article 7 of Council Directive 2002/53/EC and Article 7 of Council Directive 2002/55/EC respectively, as regards the characteristics to be covered as a minimum by the examination and the minimum conditions for examining certain varieties of agricultural plant species and vegetable species.

The Commission presented the text and removed some of the proposed modifications as the two UPOV protocols had not yet been published. A short discussion took place concerning the date of application.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

M.01 Miscellaneous

- The Commission informed about the OECD Seed Schemes meeting 3 to 5 June 2015 in Paris, France. The delegate from Italy gave an overview of the outcomes of the meetings including the Policy Forum organised together with Committee of Agriculture of OECD. The Commission raised three issues as regards the need to amend the EU legislation in relation to changes in OECD Seed Scheme's rules that were approved: (1) Modification of purity standard for spring oil seed rape, (2) Amended rules for small packages of fodder plant seed mixtures and (3) Introduction of serial number of official labels of cereal seed. A discussion took place and the Member States indicated that the EU legislation should be amended as regards points (1) and (3).
- The Commission informed about the World EXPO taking place this year in Milan/Italy with the theme 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life' 1 May to 31 October 2015. The final program of the Conference on 'Climate change and food security' – challenges for plant health, plant breeding and genetic resources of 14 July 2015 was presented. Registration is still open. Delegates from 11 Member States eligible for reimbursement of their travel expenses should contact the Commission. Some logistical aspects of the Conference were explained.
- At the request of the delegate of Denmark the Commission gave a short presentation of the new Directive (EU) 2015/412 as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in their territory. A discussion took place on the different options and procedures to be applied by the Member States in case taking national measures to use the possibilities offered by the Directive, in particular for GMOs which are currently in the pipeline for authorisation. The Commission promised to look into the possibility to add information on the event of the gene modification for a given GM variety in the footnote of GMO authorisations in the Common Catalogues.

- The delegate of Luxemburg informed about the work program of its upcoming Presidency and the co-operation with the Netherlands. Council Working Party meetings will take place on 24 September (Genetic Resources), 28 September (OECD FRM Scheme), 19 October (UPOV) and 16 December 2015 (OECD strategic issues).
- At the request of the delegate from Lithuania the Commission informed about the FVO mission to Ukraine 25 May – 4 June 2015 to evaluate Ukrainian request for EU equivalence for exportation of cereal seed to the EU. The overall outcome was positive.
- The French delegate asked about the timing of the decision making for the Ukrainian EU equivalence request. The Commission explained that as the decision will be taken by co-decision (Council and European Parliament), it will take some time and will most likely take place in 2016. At the same time the Commission's intention is also to seek to move the decision making to the Commission's level as is the case in other similar pieces of legislation.
- At the French delegate's request to increase the frequency of updates of the Common Catalogues the Commission pointed out that at a discussion on the subject in a meeting of the Standing Committee two years ago, the number of agricultural supplements was considered by Member States to be sufficient. It was also explained that the heavy and lengthy procedure involved in the publication of the current 13 yearly updates made an even more frequent publication rather unlikely. The Commission suggested that a duly timing of sending in the notifications could also help to reduce the time needed for publication.