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HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

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**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANTS, ANIMALS, FOOD AND FEED
HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 08 JUNE 2017**

(Section Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture and Horticulture)

CIRCABC Link: <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/36adc823-dc5f-425f-ae2c-4b9c5915bd13>

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

The delegate from France presented the 2016 results for forage, cereals, sugar beet and oil and fibre plants. Altogether 10 Member States (AT, BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT and the UK) and Norway participated in the experiment. The results showed only an overall 0,14 % deviation to official check testing. However, the levels of official check testing should be further decreased down to 5% to have more results at this level. Information on official post-control results will also be collected. The participating Member States should send their results for 2017 to France by 15 January 2018. The expert group will meet early March 2018. Some Member States raised again the issue on the need to have a permanent rule by revising the current Directives.

A.02 Presentation of an annual 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 results. Six Member States are participating (DE, DK, FR, NL, IT and the UK). In 2017, 37 applications were made altogether, 24 populations were authorised and 28 tons of seed produced of mostly wheat (87 %) followed by maize, barley, and oats by mainly micro-sized companies (67 %). Exchange on experiences to date has taken place. The populations were very heterogeneous and the identification as well as the quality of seed proved to be a challenge in some cases.

A.03 Presentation of a working document on the requirements for soybean, in particular the threshold for inert matter.

The Commission presented the results of the ad hoc Working Group. There is a need to harmonise the approach on inert material of soya bean seed. Some Member States include broken seed in the analysis of inert material, others not. The relationship between the threshold of 0.3 % and its analysis according to the ISTA rules should be clarified. Moreover, the working group recommend to consult EPPO on the risks of transferring harmful organisms by inert material (*Phialophora gregata* and *Phytophthora megasperma*). The delegate from the Czech Republic gave a presentation and suggested to report the results of inert matter and its inorganic part (e.g. soil) separately in the ISTA certificate. An exchange of views took place and it was suggested that the Working Group should meet again.

A.04 Presentation of an approach to seed fraud.

Following information from a stakeholder on grass seed certification in the EU the Commission decided to take up again the issue of cooperation among the Member States in case of fraud. A presentation was made on the Food Fraud Network, however, as the Directives on marketing seed are not included in the scope of the Official Control Regulation, a separate Seed Fraud Network would need to be established. An exchange of views took place and the Member States agreed on setting up such a new network. The Commission will update the document on the contact points and officially approach the Member States on a new network. A procedure will be presented at the next Standing Committee meeting for discussion.

A.05 Update on EU quality pest project in collaboration with the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (Presentation by EPPO).

The leader of the EPPO quality pest project presented the state of play of the project. EPPO's approach composes of the development of a methodology to assess the pests, a survey amongst Member States and stakeholders, the application of the methodology in six sectorial expert working groups and an economic study. The Commission explained the impacts of the new Plant Health Regulation. The quality pests (identity and threshold in seed) will be listed by December 2019 under the plant health regulation. However, in order to avoid a double control system, the certification and inspection requirements for a given pest will continue to be laid down under the Directives on marketing plant reproductive material. In case of a quality pest requirement a simplified plant passport will be obligatory and joined with the official certification label.

A.06 Commission/CPVO project on a unique EU IT System on plant varieties (presentation by CPVO).

The project intends to develop an IT system whereby a unique contribution may be used to submit national data to the Common Catalogues and CPVO's Variety Finder. A Working Group comprising Member State experts, stakeholders, Commission and CPVO staff will elaborate the requirements for this unique EU IT system on plant varieties and follow up on the implementation of the system. A consultation on the content and functionalities will be carried out by the end of June with a deadline of

end of September 2017. The next Working Group meeting will take place in the beginning of 2018.

A.07 Integration of molecular data into DUS testing (CPVO IMMODUS working group, presentation by CPVO).

A CPVO expert presented the IMMODUS Working Group as a think-tank aiming to develop a strategy on the incorporation of bio-molecular techniques (BMT) in testing of varieties on Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) with the goal to improve the cost efficiency of testing according to the UPOV models of use (e.g. management of reference collections, characteristic related bio-molecular markers). An update on CPVOs research projects were given. The Commission recalled the discussion in the context of the OECD Seed Schemes on using BMT as supplementary method in seed certification in case of varietal identity problems and the necessary cooperation between OECD, UPOV and ISTA on e.g. terminology, methods and their validation.

A.08 Update on the use of common names in the Directives 2002/55/EC and 2008/72/EEC.

The Commission presented the summary and conclusions of the first Working Group meeting. The experts concluded that for most species the combination of scientific and common name provides an exhaustive description of the types of varieties. However, for some species clarification is needed and the use of the category ‘Group’ from the International Code of Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants is recommended. Member States were asked to provide comments by 30 June 2017. Before a next Working Group meeting will be convened, the Commission will coordinate with the Member States to consult stakeholders on the potential consequences of changing common names or of delisting or adding species to Directives 2002/55/EC and 2008/72/EC.

A.09 Update on EU equivalence requests.

The Commission gave a short update on the situation. The requests of Ukraine, Brazil and Moldova are in the internal process. The processing of the new requests of Bolivia and Senegal is starting and for 2017 one audit mission is foreseen. India has recently made a new request. The Commission asked the Member States to provide any additional information they may have that will help demonstrating the facilitation of seed trade for EU companies.

A.10 Follow-up of OECD Seed Scheme matters.

The Commission presented shortly the key issues for the next OECD Seed Schemes meeting: varietal seed mixtures, technical requirements for buckwheat and sorghum seed, revision of Seed Schemes Strategic Plan and Action Plan, role of biochemical and molecular techniques (BMT) in variety registration and certification and rules on information on the non-official part of the label.

A.11 Exchange of views on the problems with reference material.

Point postponed.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision 2012/340/EC on the organisation of a temporary experiment under Council Directives 66/401/EEC, 66/402/EEC, 2002/54/EC, 2002/55/EC and 2002/57/EC as regards field inspection under official supervision for basic seed and bred seed of generations prior to basic seed.

The Commission presented the text on extending the term of the temporary experiment to 31 December 2019.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

C.01 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Decision approving, on behalf of the European Union, the amendment of Appendices 1 and 3 to Annex 6 to the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on trade in agricultural products.

The Commission presented the document summarising the draft Decision on extending the scope of the bilateral agreement between EU and Switzerland to also cover vegetable seed. The vote is foreseen for the next Standing Committee meeting.

M.01 Proposal for a Regulation on organic production.

A delegate inquired about the proposal for a Regulation on organic production. The Commission informed about the state-of-play of the negotiations and presented the proposals which are on the table concerning heterogeneous material and varieties suitable for organic production.

M.02 Application of the EU legislation on poppy seeds (*Papaver somniferum*) intended for medical use.

A delegate asked about the application of the EU legislation on poppy seeds (*Papaver somniferum*) that are intended for medical use. The Commission explained that a similar question was put forward on hemp seed. In this context it was clarified that the seed should meet the requirements for marketing as laid down in Directive 2002/57/EC on marketing seed of oil and fibre plants. However, no specific rules are laid down on the later use of the harvest product. Moreover, according to the Herbal Directive the classification of herbal medicinal products and their authorisation is carried out by the Member States. The Commission will seek legal clarification for the next Standing Committee meeting.

M.03 Inquiry on Commission Implementing Directive (EU) 2016/2109.

A delegate enquired whether a footnote on a maximum seed lot size of 25 tons in Annex III was deleted when the list of fodder plant species was extended by

Commission Implementing Directive (EU) 2016/2109. The Commission promised to clarify the issue and inform the Member States as soon as possible.