



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

## **Summary report of the meeting of the Expert group on legislation of seed and plant propagating material - Working Party "PLANT REPRODUCTIVE MATERIAL"**

**WEDNESDAY 3 DECEMBER 2014**

Chairperson: P. Mannerkorpi

Experts from all the Member States were present except from BG, CZ, CY, LU, PT, RO and SL. NO participated too.

### **1. Exchange of views on EU rules for the labelling of small packages (EU and OECD).**

The Commission presented a working document on a comparison of the rules for small packages in the EU and the OECD. There are no specific rules in the OECD for small packages of grass and legume seed (only vegetable seed). An exchange of views took place, in particular on the issue of flexibility of the Member States to decide whether to request the listing on the label of all components or to allow the notification of the components to the competent authorities so that the composition is made available to the users only on request. The Member States agreed to suggest to the OECD an approach along the line of the EU legislation. The Netherlands will revise the document for the OECD accordingly.

### **2. Exchange of views on the use of bio-molecular methods in seed certification (EU and OECD).**

The Commission presented a working document analysing the legal situation as regards the use of bio-molecular techniques for determining varietal identity and purity. Only in very specific cases (hybrids of *Brassica napus*) reference is made to these methods in the EU legislation. During the discussion it was recognised that significant developments in the methodology have taken place: they are nowadays less costly and a number of international organisations (UPOV, ISTA) have advanced in addressing the issue. A small EU expert group (DE, DK, FR, IE, NL, UK and CPVO) will be established to discuss the issue and to make recommendations on the way forward for seed certification in view of EU legislation and the EU positions for the OECD Seed Scheme.

### **3. Discussion on a draft Implementing Directive amending the EU requirements for barley hybrids laid down in the Annexes of the Council Directive 66/402/EEC.**

The Commission presented a working document on possible EU rules for the certification of seed of hybrid barley. A discussion took place on controls with regard to the requirement to verify varietal purity by field inspections and/or official post-controls but not by double controls. Parallel discussion is taking place in the context of the OECD Seed Schemes, and the outcome should be awaited before presenting the text to the Standing Committee.

**4. Exchange of views on the possible use of the TRACES system as regards plant reproductive material imports and information exchanges among Member States.**

The Commission presented a working document outlining the information received by competent authorities in case plant reproductive material is imported. A discussion took place about the way the TRACES system could support control activities of competent authorities. It was concluded that the current system of import control of seed is not sufficiently harmonised and that TRACES would at present not offer significant added value.

**5. Questions related to the taxonomy of plant species.**

The Commission presented a working document summarising the available plant taxonomy databases and information as regards their coverage. The discussion reaffirmed the need to ensure that taxonomy is applied consistently in EU legislation and in international fora such as UPOV, OECD and ISTA. It was concluded that it is necessary to work more proactively in all these fora to minimise the risk of incompatible taxonomy.

**6. Exchange of views on a further harmonisation of post-controls.**

The Commission presented a working document on a comparison of the EU rules and the rules of the OECD Seed Schemes laid down for controls on varietal identity and purity. During the discussion the need to harmonise the controls in the EU and to spell out some vague OECD rules was highlighted. The opinion was also expressed that the very detailed OECD guidelines would not need to be implemented in the EU legislation.

**7. Miscellaneous**

- The Commission informed that it intends to carry out a two year study with the aim to review currently regulated quality pests and the risk management measures in place and assess their economic impact on the intended use as plant reproductive material. Also to be included in the study are a number of potential candidate quality pests, which are today regulated within the Directive 2000/29/EU as quarantine organisms. The study is carried out in order to prepare the basis of the list of Union quality pests to be established as part of the new plant health proposal. However, the certification requirements (field inspection, sampling and testing) would be established under the plant reproductive material proposal.

- The Commission reminded the Member States about the request to provide the contact details of their competent authority responsible for providing reference samples for post-control testing on request. The contact list will be put on CIRCABC.
- On the request of the delegate from the Netherlands the Commission gave a short update on the proposal for plant reproductive material. The new Commission should decide in December on the Commission Working Programme for 2015 and thus on the way forward. The Italian Presidency is in the process of sending a letter to the Vice Presidents and the Commissioner in charge recalling the position of the Council.
- The delegate from Poland informed about falsified Polish official labels on large volumes of grass seed which has been marketed to BE, FR, IT and PT. PT has taken immediate action and stopped the trade. The Member States will cooperate and investigate together to identify the producer of false labels.
- The delegate of Denmark raised the issue of rules on reference number in case of dividing a seed lot and the establishment of different lots with different marketing categories. The issue will be discussed in the next Standing Committee meeting.
- The delegate from Austria requested to review the requirement as regards the number of seeds (15%) contaminated with *Diaporthe phaseolorum* var. *phaseolorum* in soy bean. The Commission will look into the issue once having received more detailed information from Austria.