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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 15 APRIL 2019**

(Section Seeds and Propagating Material for Agriculture and Horticulture)

CIRCABC Link: <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/77944e5c-81ff-4be0-a7d6-b54e7644406c>

A.01 Presentation of draft guidelines on providing reference material and control of maintenance of varieties.

The Commission gave an update on the progress of the work. A short exchange took place on the use of the certification controls of pre-basic and basic material for controlling variety maintenance. The deadlines for the comments of the Working Group was extended to 3 May 2019. The draft guidelines will be presented in the next Committee meeting.

A.02 Update on DUS testing of onions and shallots.

The Commission presented the outcome of a series of meetings with Dutch and French competent authorities, French shallot growers and Dutch breeders on the classification of certain seed propagated varieties of *Allium cepa* L. as onion or shallot. In a joint meeting of Dutch and French competent authorities with the Commission it was agreed to jointly explore the possibility of using DNA and metabolic data and new morphological characteristics to establish a more reliable characterisation of onions and shallots with the aim to minimise the grey area between the onion and shallot varieties. A joint Dutch, French, Commission and CPVO working group was set up for this purpose.

A.03 Exchange of views of a request from France to add species to Directives 66/401/EEC, 2002/55/EC and 2002/57/EC.

France presented its request to add *Lens culinaris*, *Cicer arietinum*, *Fagopyrum esculentum* and *Camelina sativa* to the list of species to the Marketing Directives. The Commission highlighted that it requires the ordinary legislative procedure to add species and requirements to Directives 66/402/EEC and 2002/57/EC while this can be done through a Commission Implementing Directive in case of Directives 66/401/EEC and 2002/55/EC. The Commission and Member States also emphasized that before adding species to or deleting species from the scope of the Marketing Directives it would be preferable to clarify the criteria to be employed in such a decision. Member States proposed to create a working group to establish such criteria and add this issue to the Work Programme of the Committee.

A.04 Exchange of views on a request from France to include rootstocks and vegetatively propagated varieties of vegetables into Decision 2004/842/EC.

France presented its request to include rootstocks and vegetable propagating material to the scope of Commission Decision 2004/842/EC. Several Member States expressed support for this request, while other Member States doubted the necessity of such an extension of the scope. The Commission asked Member States to send information and data supporting the need to include rootstocks and vegetable propagating material.

A.05 Update on the implementing act and amendments in relation to regulated non-quarantine pests (RNQPs).

The Commission thanked the Member States for their comments, gave a short update on the progress of the work and informed about the upcoming Working Group meeting on 29 April to discuss the implementing act under the new Plant Health Regulation and the amendments of the Marketing Directives. Concerning the agricultural crops, the Commission informed about the changes and asked about the RNQPs in relation to ISTA purity analysis and storage pests. On the latter it was concluded that they fall under the general requirement of 'practically free'. The Commission also asked for proposals from Member States for alternatives to the use of 0%-thresholds of RNQPs in the sections on seed potatoes, vegetable seed and vegetable propagating and planting material in Annex III of the draft implementing act. Several Member States requested a transition period (in particular as RNQPs for new crops are laid down), derogations to the plant passport requirements, how to regulate species not covered by the MS (example hop) and regulation of seed of conservation and amateur varieties as no marketing categories are defined for them.

A.06 Update on the approach to seed fraud.

The Commission gave a short update, in particular on the contact list which had been requested to be updated following the new EU Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions. One Member State indicated issues in using the Seed Fraud Network as it is not obligatory and because confidentiality is not ensured in a simple system of e-mail exchanges.

A.07 Update on EU equivalence requests.

The Commission provided a summary of the state of play of the existing equivalence requests: Ukraine, Bolivia, India, Senegal and Jordan. The Commission is currently looking into the request of Ukraine.. A decision for Bolivia will be prepared after the new Commission will be in place. The analysis of the relevant Indian legislation is on-going with the help of Member States' experts. No new information was received from Senegal or Jordan. The issue of import controls was raised, in particular in case of non-certified seed lots being imported solely for processing and subsequently being transferred to third countries. It was decided to work on guidelines on harmonised controls and inspections and to add this item to the Work Programme of the Committee.

A.08 Technical matters related to the preparation of the OECD Seed Schemes: biomolecular techniques and seed mixtures.

The Commission gave a short update on some technical issues needing further work after the last OECD Seed Schemes Technical Working Group meeting end of January 2019. As regards CPVO (and UPOV) variety testing protocols it seems that for some bio-molecular techniques (BMT) no real validation by all participating laboratories is carried out. It seems that expert groups recognise certain methods based on e.g. limited ring tests, experience or on research results. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to use the term 'international recognition' for BMT. On seed mixtures, Member States informed about a growing interest for organic production, greening, energy plant production etc. The Commission also informed about the intention of the OECD Seed Schemes secretariat to give a presentation on new IT technology on block chain technology in the next meeting.

A.09 Exchange of views on the Working Programme for 2019.

The Commission presented the Working Programme. Some Member States asked again for the revision of the Marketing Directives to have permanent rules on field inspection under official supervision. It was decided to add new items on import controls (implementation of Article 19(2)) and criteria for listing/delisting species. One Member State asked why there is no IT system for not-yet listed varieties. Italy informed about the next meeting of the Working Group on the temporary experiment on populations in Italy.

B.01 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Directive amending Council Directives 2002/55/EC and 2008/72/EC as regards the use of scientific and common names for vegetable species.

The Commission presented the text and highlighted the revision of the previous version adding some changes to Annexes II and III of Council Directive 2002/55/EC reflecting the amendment of Article 2(1)(b) of that Directive. Member States requested more time to transpose the Implementing Directive in order to help operators to apply the required changes. The date of transposition was changed to 30 June 2020 and the date of application to 1 July 2020.

Vote taken: Favourable opinion.

M.01 Miscellaneous

Germany pointed out that at the OECD Annual Meeting in 2018 it was announced that several species names were about to be updated in the OECD Seed Schemes: *Triticum aestivum* L. subsp. *spelta* (L.) Thell. (previously *Triticum spelta* L.), *Triticum turgidum* L. subsp. *durum* (Desf.) Husn. (previously *Triticum durum* Desfn.), *Sorghum bicolor* (L.) Moench subsp. *drummondii* (Steud.) de Wet ex Davidse (previously *Sorghum sudanense* (Piper (Stapf) and *Agrostis vinealis* Schreb. subsp. *vinealis* (previously *Agrostis canina* L. subsp. *montana* (Hartm.)). Germany asked if the same changes are planned for the Marketing Directives. The Commission will examine this issue.

Germany requested clarification on the issue whether labels should continue to use the term “EC rules and standards” or if “EU rules and standards” should be used. The Commission pointed out that any reference to “EC” in the marketing legislation should be read as “EU”.

Estonia requested an update of contact information from Member States.

The Commission informed about the preparatory work on the acts on seed to be adopted under the organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848. A first expert group meeting on the delegated act on organic heterogeneous material will take place on 4 June 2019. No concrete meeting dates have been set for preparing the temporary experiment on a testing regime for varieties suitable for organic cultivation. The Commission informed that the meeting of the Member States’ group of VCU experts will, at its meeting in June in the Netherlands, focus on VCU testing for organic varieties. The Commission will participate as an observer and participating Member States will inform the Standing Committee on the outcomes of the meeting.