

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL Directorate D TRADE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL Directorate D

> Brussels, SANTE D2/TRADE D3/AH/PL/tt (2019)

REPORT OF THE SPS EXPERTS MEETING OF 22 FEBUARY 2019 TO PREPARE FOR THE WTO SANITARY AND PHYTOSANITARY COMMITTEE OF MARCH 2019

The meeting was convened to prepare the 74th regular meeting of the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS Committee) that took place at the Centre William Rappard, Geneva on **21 and 22 March 2019**. The SPS Committee meeting is preceded by thematic sessions on Equivalence (18 March) and Fall armyworm (19 March) and an informal meeting of the Committee on 20 March to discuss proposals for reform.

Commission informed the MS, that all travel verification documents and also meeting documents is processed via the new AGM tool.

I.GENERAL ISSUES

COM provided information to the Member States on the following issues:

- EU information to the WTO SPS Members on recent development in EU decisionmaking (OCR, animal health and Plant health legislation);
- Thematic sessions planned before the SPS Committee meeting on fall armyworm and equivalence;
- The state of play of the fifth review of the operation and implementation of the SPS Agreement.

II.SPECIFIC ISSUES

A. ISSUES OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO THIRD COUNTRIES.

The issues raised by third countries at the previous SPS Committee meetings were discussed and an update was given by COM on the topics which were likely to be raised at the next meeting.

B. Issues of interest to the **EU**

B.1. WTO Dispute Settlement cases

COM provided information on the state of play of the current WTO Dispute Settlement case of the EU with Russia concerning the importation of live pigs, pork and other pig products.

B.2. <u>Possible specific trade concerns (STCs)</u>

The issues raised by the EU at the previous SPS Committee meetings were discussed and an update was given by COM on the topics which are likely to be raised at the next meeting.

B.3. Monitoring of the use of international standards

COM informed the Member States on cases where trade restrictions had been introduced by third countries, which are not in line with the international standards (ASF, HPAI) and outlined its planed actions to remedy the situation.

B.4 Update of the import restrictions imposed on the EU by third countries

COM briefly presented updated information about the import restrictions imposed by third countries. The information is available in the Market Access Data Base. Member States were invited to review the tables and provide updates as soon as restrictions are lifted or new restrictions were imposed.

It remains a top priority of COM to address these unjustified trade barriers.

COM reminded Member States that all notifications to OIE related to disease outbreaks should contain a description of regionalisation measures so that it is clear that regionalisation is applied.

Finally, COM reported about planned changes in the Market Access Data Base where Member States will get the option to directly update their entries.

B.5 SPS Market Access Working Group

The next SPS Market Access Working Group will be on 3 April 2019 in the Centre Borschette in Brussels. As always in the first meeting of a new calendar year, DG AGRI will present the trade figures of the agri-food sector for 2018.

The Commission repeated the suggestion that one Member State may volunteer to give a presentation describing their administrative practices related to export promotion and market access, following the recent presentation of Portugal.

B.6. SPS study visits to the EU - 2018 activities, planning for 2019

The Commission informed about the outcome of recent study visits and those being planned.

A number of study visits are under consideration for the 2019 programme. The Commission invited Member States to express possible interest to participate these study visits, if they materialise. COM invited additional suggestions from Member States and EU industry.

B.7. SPS market access issues and possible bilateral meetings in Geneva

COM briefly referred to the update of the priorities/planning documents that were circulated via a note to TPC/Roosendaal/Potsdam to Member States. . The priorities are updated twice a year by consulting the MSs and these are then made available for our stakeholders as well.

In the context of pursuing market access priorities the WTO SPS Committee presents an important opportunity. The Commission invited Member States to further intensify the sharing of information of their activities undertaken on SPS barriers.

To further easy the sharing of information, the Commission services provided an update on the ongoing work to improve the MADB.

The Commission informed Member States about a number of SPS market access issues and to request bilateral meetings on the margins of the next SPS Committee meeting. To prepare the bilateral meetings with third countries, Member States were reminded to provide information on the latest developments on these countries/market access issues.

III.PRACTICAL INFORMATION

WTO Members' contributions to the final agenda of the SPS Committee will have to be submitted to the Secretariat by **28 February 2019**. Therefore, any input from EU Member States should be submitted to the Commission as soon as possible but **no later than 22 February 2019**.

General SPS concerns and EU import related issues should be addressed to the EU SPS Notification Authority and Enquiry Point.

Member States are kindly reminded that the Commission would appreciate being kept informed of any significant developments with respect to MS trade concerns particularly when the Commission has been involved in related multilateral or bilateral discussions.

IV.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

FI noted that under Agenda Point 2 of the SPS Committee there is the information from other organisations. In this context FI referred to the International Year of Plant Health that is planned for 2020. The IPPC will probably make an announcement in the SPS Committee and FI would welcome a supportive statement from the Commission on this occasion. COM took note and would consider the proposal.