

STRATEGIC AGENDA CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP

QUALITY AND PROMOTION

FINAL VERSION

I. INTRODUCTION

Assuring the quality of agricultural production is a priority for the entire supply chain and the European institutions. EU law lays down high standards for all European products. Quality is perceived by European citizens as a broad concept that includes the product's intrinsic characteristics including the origin, the biodiversity and the traditional knowledge as well as hygiene, health and sustainability aspects (which encompasses the social, economic and environmental aspects). Labelling and certification schemes, as a way to differentiate products on the market, and enable consumers to make informed choices according to their interests including issues such as production methods, are also an important issue. Indeed, the CDG is the suitable forum to discuss all issues that have a direct impact on the quality of agricultural products.

The European Promotion Policy for agricultural products has an important role to play for EU farmers, agri-cooperatives, food industry and trade sector. Promotion schemes are highly relevant in supporting the key assets of European agricultural products and food products (such as quality, nutritional value and compliance with high environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards) on the internal market and non-EU countries. In both cases competition with other suppliers is growing (Free trade agreements, globalization, emerging markets such as BRIC). Opportunities can be seized in Asia, Africa and both Americas whereas at the same time there is an increased pressure on the internal market from Mediterranean countries, near East, Asia and both Americas. In addition, there is also potential to use promotional schemes to support the development of short supply chains across Europe as well as to encourage information on more high quality and sustainable food consumption.

The Civil Dialogue Group on Quality and Promotion provides a forum for exchange between stakeholders and the EU Commission on all matters regarding quality related issues and promotion of EU agricultural and food products. Constructive debate and constant communication between the EU legislator and different stakeholders is essential for practical, efficient and effective legislation. Existing good practices where the European Institutions foster the active involvement of stakeholders should be maintained and used to further improve the engagement of the relevant stakeholders in the consultation process. This is of mutual interest to both public and private representatives.

The document aims to provide an overview of the main policy areas to be covered by the work of the CDG Quality and Promotion. Therefore, it is an indicative list that should not exclude new developments in future.

II. PROMOTION OF EU AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

1. Follow up of the EU promotion policy reform and implementation of the new promotion policy

- The CDG shall be informed about and consulted throughout the final stage of the reform process and during the implementation stage of the new promotion policy.

The CDG will monitor and take initiatives on the following items :

A. Executive Agency

Setting up of this agency, its tasks, future work, financing and the involvement of stakeholders. The Executive Agency should also be involved in the work and discussion of the CDG to bring transparency about the selection of the programmes and share the main focus of the accepted programmes.

B. European Strategy and work programme

The CDG should play a role in the definition of a strategy for the promotion of agricultural and food products in the internal market and in non-EU markets. It is also important to ensure that the strategy is compatible with national and private activities.

C. Adoption process of delegated and implementing acts

The delegated and implementing acts will play an important role in the shaping of the new EU promotion policy.

2. Follow-up of Commission's high level missions:

- The CDG should be involved in the definition of the third countries targeted as well as the products promoted.

3. Follow-up of the promotion's programmes approved and rejected:

- The CDG should have an overview of the numbers of programmes approved and rejected by the Commission as well as the reasons including budgetary aspects.

4. Platform of exchange of experience and best practices

- The CDG should be involved in the setting up of an institutionalised forum for exchange of experience and best practices as part of the technical support needed by the sector. This should help stakeholders in collecting ideas, networking and better targeting future programmes. In the meantime, the CDG proposes that an event on best practices is regularly organised with stakeholders and the European Commission. The CDG will also provide inputs regarding the setting up of the new technical service of the Commission.

5. New proposals relevant for the promotion of agricultural products, including issues such as the CAP school schemes or the EU Organic Action Plan.

III. QUALITY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The main priorities of the CDG:

1. Regulation No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs:

- Information (to be provided by the Commission) and discussion of any potential delegated and implementing acts to supplement and implement the regulation.
- If necessary, monitor possible problems (e.g. rules on controls, registration procedures, etc.)
- Optional quality terms (OQTs) - Follow-up on the implementation of the OQT "Mountain product" and follow-up on the reports on the case for a local farming labelling scheme and for a new term "product of island farming."

2. Regulation No 110/2008 on [...] the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks:

- Information (to be provided by the Commission) and discussion of any potential delegated and implementing acts to supplement and implement the regulation.
- Discussions concerning the possible inclusion of new spirit GIs in the register

3. Follow up of the discussions and possibilities to review the potential for further simplification in the area of quality policy:

The CDG provides the right forum for exchange between stakeholders and EU Commission on the possibility to simplify the quality policy. If this is finally the case, stakeholders should play a very important role in the simplification process.

4. Regulation No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (FIC):

- Implement the provisions relating to the provision of food information to consumers:
 - Article 26 on the “country of origin or place of provenance”: follow-up (to be provided by the EC) and discussion on the implementing rules in case of voluntary origin and specific reports on origin labelling for various categories and products.
 - Exchange of views on other possible quality-related issues in the regulation.
 - Follow-up of the implementation of the FIC regulation and exchange of views on best practices to encourage food information to consumers.

5. Agricultural policy (CAP):

- Implementation of the new CAP (quality related issues):
 - **Rural development:** inclusion of the support measures for quality schemes in national programmes and implementing Article 16 of Regulation No 1305/2013
 - **Single CMO:** follow-up on horizontal quality related issues (for instance, production requirements or marketing standards)

6. Commission’s proposal on official controls:

- Monitor discussions (to be provided by the EC) – link with quality certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

7. Sustainability:

- Follow-up on the consultation and on the foreseen communication on sustainability of the food system (information to be provided by the EC)
- Identify and monitor sustainability schemes with a large scope (environmental, social and economic)

8. Follow-up of the evaluation of the possibility of a system of Geographical indication protection for non-agricultural products at EU level

9. Monitoring of GI’s protection¹:

- Recognition of EU GIs in third countries
- Monitor the possible evolution of trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights and geographical indications
- Monitor of GIs protection on the internet

10. EU best practice guidelines for voluntary quality certification schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs

- Monitor the development and implementation of the EU best practice guidelines
- Use the CDG as a platform to exchange experiences and best practices

11. Follow-up of SPS-related issues relevant for the CDG “Quality and Promotion”

¹ The CDG acknowledges that international related issues are addressed in the CDG «International aspects of agriculture». Nevertheless, the CDG Quality and Promotion considers of the utmost relevance to have a regular update on quality related issues at international level (e.g. the list of GIs in the TTIP negotiations).

12. New proposals relevant for the quality of agricultural production, for instance to monitor the impact of EU quality schemes on the sustainable development of rural territories.