

Civil Dialogue Group – International Aspects of Agriculture Notes

Meeting via videoconference (Interactio) on Thursday 11 May 2023 from 09:30 to 17:00

1. Welcome participants / Adoption of agenda

Willi Schulz-Greve, Head of Unit DG AGRI, International - Global issues, WTO & relations with ACP (AGRI.G.1)

Time	DG AGRI - UREÑA DE POZNANSKI SOLDIMAR (PRESENTATION)	Speakers
9:30-9:50	1. Welcome participants / Adoption of agenda 2. Technical explanations about interpretation	Chair (AGRI G1) SCIC team
9:50-10:15	3. Adoption of Rules of Procedure	Chair (AGRI G1)
10:15-11:00	4. EU agri-food trade developments in 2022	AGRI G1
11:00-12:00 (10 min /participant)	5. Presentations by CDG members: priorities in relation to the international aspects of agriculture	Freshfel Agroecology Europe Trade Promotion Europe European Milk Board
12:00-12:30	6. Update on WTO agricultural negotiations ahead of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, February 2024	AGRI G1
12:30-14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00-15:30	7. State of Play: Neighborhood countries (20min) Asia and Australasia (20min) The Americas (10min) ACP (10min)	AGRI G4 AGRI G3 AGRI G2 AGRI G1
15:30-15:45	8. Africa: - European Union – African Union Agri Ministerial Conference - African Union Continental strategy for GIs in Africa	AGRI G1
15:45-16:00	9. Food security	INTPA F3
16:00-16:15	10. Food System Summit Stocktaking	INTPA F3 / SANTE A4
16:15-16:50	11. Questions to CDG members: - How do you assess the EU activities taken so far to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems internationally? - Could you share the activities of your organisation to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems internationally? - What should the European Commission do in addition to existing activities?	
16:50-16:55	12. AOB	
16:55-17:00	13. Conclusions	Chair (AGRI G1)

2. Technical explanations about interpretation

3. Adoption of Rules of Procedure of the CDG for International Aspects of Agriculture

4. Presentation of the latest EU agri-food trade developments;

Q&A

Jamie Fortescue STARCH Europe – you mentioned a significant increase in isoglucose imports from Ukraine. Could you clarify how much ? Thank-you.

Marie-Christine Ribera CEFS – UK: could you provide specific data on sugar and sugar containing products? Thank you

Arthur Boy CEPM – How are the measures with the five countries concerning safeguards being implemented? Particularly regarding the transit?

Thank you for your response. The concrete implementation and enforcement of the political decision regarding transit and respect of SPS measures of Ukrainian grain is key

Radic Tajana COPA – Concerned that the standards of imports from Ukraine are not meeting those that EU producers.

Barthelemy Lanos / DG AGRI: Unable to provide clarification on how the transit measure is implemented on the ground.

Spáčilová Kristýna FEFAC – HU hasn't lifted its national ban and forbids to import products beyond those 4 listed by Commission. Can they do that? Is Commission in contact with them?

Kovács Gergely ASSUC – To the question of FEFAC-SPACILOVA KRISTYNA: Have the other countries like Poland and Slovakia withdrawn their unilateral measures against Ukrainian imports?

5. Presentations by selected new CDG members of their priorities in relation to the international aspects of agriculture; Q&A

6. Update on WTO agricultural negotiations ahead of the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference, February 2024; Q&A

Agata Galinska, Deputy Head of Unit, DG AGRI G1

One issue is addressing public stockholding for food security aspects, and also subsidies. Subsidies in India, though meant to support food security, distort the market and support exports. The EU is working very hard on addressing these points. EU trying to push forward an agenda of reforms for subsidies in the WTO.

Blockage of dispute settlement body is the most prominent horizontal issue, and resolving this is a core priority for the Commission in terms of the WTO and reforming this.

The impact of climate and environment policy are a priority in terms of transparency and rules, as an issue that the Commission is trying to bring into the Agricultural Committee and bilaterally.

Arthur Boy CEPM – How is the Commission defending and promoting its proposal on the deforestation free regulation, as it is understood that it has been criticised in the WTO, particularly by Brazil, and also how does this regulation play into the Mercosur agreement conclusions?

Agata Galinska: the approach of the EU has been to push for

7. State of play of trade agreements negotiations and implementation and Q&A

a. Neighbourhood countries

Frank Bollen, Head of Unit DG AGRI Neighbourhood enlargement & pre-accession assistance (AGRI.G.4)

On UK, more than 21% of all agri-food exports went to UK in 2022. After 2 years of TCA, the agri-food trade has been resilient, exports remained unchanged in 2021, and increased in 2022. Imports from the UK decreased after the TCA.

Largely liberalised UK market for sensitive sectors will add pressure to EU exports to the UK, over time.

Ukraine: the ATM has led to significant increases of volumes from Ukraine in sectors agricultural products such as sugar, the increases may be also due to other measures than just the ATM (e.g. poor crops from HU)

Monitoring is important and it is possible to see on the page of DG TRADE, that there are up to date On Article 4 expedited safeguards, that means publishing import statistics every month on the webpage and a monitoring report to MS every 2 months. If need be, the COM can act faster and easier to apply in the future. The draft regulation is almost adopted, with Council ready to formalise

its position in the coming two weeks, following Monday's big vote of the Parliament in favour of the Regulation.

Noted the significant increase in imports of some products to some MS, so in beginning of May, the Commission adopted preventative measures for 4 products, so that until 5 June these cannot be exported to the frontier MS but they can transit through the MS.

Moldova has similar position as Ukraine, though in 2022 there were additional volumes for the products under quota, but the new proposal is for full liberalisation of these goods.

Dobrescu Emilian SACAR – wanted to find out how Commission is planning to protect sugar production in EU and compensate sugar producers if affected by supply from Ukraine?

Jamie Fortescue STARCH Europe – Same question as for sugar regarding isoglucose. Thank-you.

Mr Frank Bollen DG AGRI – The impact of the Ukrainian imports is being monitored across the board, and not to look at what is happening just from one country as far as imports, but looking at the broader picture where in the case of sugar, there have been big increases in prices.

Kovács Gergely ASSUC – Please consider my morning's question about status of unilateral measures of PL, HU and SK against Ukrainian imports.

EU Solution is reached end of April are the preventative measure for 4 products, readiness to look at other products (based on the regulation that is to be passed in June), additional support to 5 member states still to be voted in the Committee, as the Commission is waiting for all the MS to withdraw their measures which is not yet the case.

Discussion with the different authorities and stakeholders on what more can be done to facilitate exports through the grain corridors even as more efforts are put to the issue of the Black Sea channel.

b. Asia and Australasia

Catherine Combette, Head of Unit DG AGRI Asia and Australasia (AGRI.G.3)

Negotiations ongoing or finished: NZ, Australia, Indonesia, India

Negotiations paused: Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand

No FTA negotiations: China, Mongolia

NZ

Signature ready in July, followed by ratification and EIF, likely to take place first half 2024.

Australia

15 rounds of negotiations concluded, last formal round in April before entering the "end game" with 10 more chapters having been concluded. Discussions during May at technical level, political level in early June, with a view to concluding negotiations before July end, when the EU summer begins.

On agricultural market access, final offer will be made at the end of this month on the sensitive products including sugar. Account is taken on the current EU market context and cumulative effect of all the EU's FTA market access.

India

Three track negotiations (FTA, investment agreement, and GIs)

Four rounds of negotiations so far, and no discussions yet on market access.

The fifth round will be 19 June in Delhi.

Indonesia

This week in Brussels the 14th round with Indonesia is ongoing, a key round to assess whether Indonesia is engaging and ready to conclude the deal. There is a political will to finish negotiations before the Indonesia parliamentary negotiations in 2024 (General elections are scheduled to be held in Indonesia on 14 February 2024)

Thailand

Leaders decided to relaunch negotiations and in September the relaunch of negotiations with Thailand is expected.

Arthur Boy CEPM – Sweetcorn anti-dumping measures are in place against Thailand, which is the number one exporter of sweetcorn globally. EU producers are nervous about these negotiations and wish for sweetcorn to be excluded from the negotiations of the FTA

Catherine Combette, Head of Unit DG AGRI There will be the offensive and defensive interests for the EU and Thailand and it is not possible to exclude from the outset specific products without consulting all stakeholders as the market access has to be based on the balance struck on offensive and defensive interests.

SIA will be carried out by the Commission on the Thailand FTA, which will be an important element in the consideration of the human rights and democracy questions in Thailand.

c. The Americas

Giulio Menato, DG AGRI

Chile

Commission working on legal scrubbing, after which translation, with the aim of sending the agreement to Parliament and Council by end of this year.

Mexico

Still discussions ongoing about the exact architecture of this agreement. No information possible on a timeline on the infrastructure .

Mercosur

Finalisation of GIs, hoping to conclude these technical aspects. Change of presidency in Brazil has also changed the paradigm on sustainability and environment and with this change, the Commission finds it opportune to move forward with the additional instrument, proposed to Mercosur, and now awaiting the feedback from Mercosur members in order to start negotiations. In July there will be the Summit of the ECLAC heads of state.

d. Economic Partnership Agreements with ACP countries

Naomi Barbariere, DG AGRI

SADC EPA

The EPA foresees a review of the agreement, and a public consultation is ongoing

South Africa

With South Africa, the main question is on SPS, keeping in place the anti-dumping duties on poultry from certain EU MS.

ESA5

Deepening of the negotiations between the ESA5, on the 12th round of negotiations which are taking place in Brussels, and the finalisation of these negotiations are uncertain.

The most sensitive discussions are in relation to sugar, which is the product of most interest to the ESA5.

8. Africa:

a. State of play of the preparation of the European Union – African Union Agricultural Ministerial Conference, June 2023

b. State of play of the Continental strategy on GIs for Africa

9. State of play about Food security activities by the EU

10. State of play about the preparation of the Food System Summit Stocktaking, July 2023

11. Questions to CDG members and discussions: - How do you assess the EU activities taken so far to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems internationally? - Could you share with the CDG members the activities of your organisation to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems internationally? - What should the European Commission do in addition to existing activities?

12. AOB

13. Conclusions

Next meeting will be in October.