Meeting of the AFCRT – *13 March 2025*

Draft minutes

*Paula de Vera, Copa and Cogeca*

**List of participants:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Name + *surname*** (*surname alphabetical order)* | **Organization** *(alphabetical order)* |
| Alexander Krick | CIBE |
| Maelle Mabecque | CIBE |
| Stéphanie Pelet-Serra | COCERAL |
| Verena Scherfranz | Copa and Cogeca |
| Max Schulman | Copa and Cogeca |
| Paula de Vera | Copa and Cogeca |
| Emma Brown | CropLifeEurope |
| Kevin Heylen | CropLifeEurope |
| Stuart Rutherford | CropLifeEurope |
| Juliette-Marie Margueritte | EUPPA |
| Michelle End | EuroCocoa |
| Romans Vorss | Europatat |
| Amalia Kafka | Euroseeds |
| Angeliki Stavropoulou | FEDIOL |
| Arnaud Bouxin | FEFAC |
| Egle Baecke | FRESHFEL |
| Joao Pereira | FRUCOM |
| Katri SAARI | FRUCOM / CEEREAL |
| Jeremy Belzunces | IBMA |
| Nigel Thorgrimsson | PROFEL |

**Minutes of the meeting:**

1. **Approval of the agenda**

The agenda was approved with no additions. A reminder was given to ensure minutes remain concise and are circulated promptly.

1. **Election of AFCRT Chair for the 2025-2027 mandate**

Copa and Cogeca were supported for a third and final mandate under Max Schulman, with no new volunteers stepping forward. A two-week consultation window was agreed to allow other potential candidates to express interest.

1. **For information: Commission’s Work Programme 2025**

The group acknowledged the relevance of upcoming Commission work but noted limited clarity at this stage. Partners were asked to keep the Chair informed of related initiatives.

1. **Roundtable discussion: Commission’s Vision for Agriculture and Food**

Partners reflected on the Vision’s implications across the chain, highlighting key achievements (e.g., biocontrol), opportunities (engagement and simplification), threats (regulatory hurdles, reciprocity), and unanswered questions.

The group reviewed feedback received on the Commission’s Vision, emphasising the importance of a coordinated response. Partners agreed to develop a collective approach to engage with the Commission, with Chairmanship to circulate a draft proposal and organise a follow-up ad-hoc meeting.

1. **Key Messages**

The Vision was welcomed overall, especially its support for biocontrol and digitalisation. Concerns were raised around clarity and feasibility of timelines, and the need for real simplification. Partners stressed the importance of proactive communication and coordination across the chain.

1. **Opportunities**

Participants highlighted the chance to improve understanding and alignment on concepts like biocontrol and biopesticides, and to promote effective alternatives. The Vision’s broader scope was seen as a shift from Farm to Fork, offering potential for more balanced strategies and long-term solutions.

1. **Threats**

Issues such as regulatory bottlenecks, lack of incentives for innovation, unpredictability of emergency authorisations, and growing trade pressures were discussed. The erosion of available tools is impacting production and competitiveness, underscoring the urgency for strategic alignment.

1. **Questions Posed by the Vision**

Partners called for clarity on Commission responsibilities and engagement mechanisms, including the roles of DG AGRI and DG SANTE. The EBAF platform was viewed positively, with interest in AFCRT contributing to its work. Next steps include refining AFCRT’s input, assessing open questions, and preparing a draft proposal for review.

The Chairmanship will refine AFCRT’s input, assessing the open questions, and prepare a draft a proposal to coordinate AFCRT’s future messages to the Commission, organising an ad-hoc online meeting to follow-up and coordinate the next steps.

1. **For information: state of play about import tolerances in the EU**

The group discussed the evolving debate on reciprocity and trade impacts, acknowledging ongoing uncertainties. CropLife Europe will share relevant updates with Copa and Cogeca.

1. **AOB**

Members were invited to CropLife Europe’s MRL Workshop, with outcomes to be featured in the October agenda. The next online meeting is set for 5 June. Concerns were raised about the effects of a shrinking toolbox, including industrial impacts.