Report of the meeting of the UEAA Steering Committee with the EU Commissioner for Agriculture Ph Hogan
The Berlaymont Building, Brussels – Belgium

28 September 2017

Part 2[1] – Steering Committee meeting

Attendees: J Nedělník, T Doucha (CR), B Bourget, M Thibier (FR), G Maracchi, A Longo, R Scalacci, (IT), Z Dabkevičius (LT), I Jelev, V Tabără (RO), T Garcia Azcarate, E Redondo Jimenez (SP), K Niblaeus, H Svensson (SE), I Gadzalo, I Hrynyk (UKr), D Gardner (UK).
Observer: O Cellini, F Bolsaci (IT).

The meeting started at the Berlaymont Building, at 16.45hr.

1. **Welcome address**

After the Commissioner Ph. Hogan shook hands with all attendees who introduced themselves, the President of the UEAA steering Committee, M Thibier thanked the Commissioner for giving this European scientific and technical Association the opportunity to exchange with him on a very topical theme, that of the Common Agricultural Policy. He briefly introduced the UEAA. He stressed the fact that the UEAA members, the European National Academies or associate institutions were for most of them independent of their Government and hence had some added value which could be invaluable to the Commission.
He mentioned to the Commissioner that this Steering Committee had worked the whole day to establish a UEAA position on the future of the CAP which has been written on paper and handed over to him. He finally suggested that the rapporteur of this to day meeting Dr. B Bourget (French Academy of Agriculture) presents and reads this one page document (reported in the minutes of this Steering Committee meeting).
The Commissioner again thanked very much the UEAA of having agreed in meeting with him accompanied by the presence of two collaborators (E Syracusa –deputy chef de cabinet and A Rouby - in charge of research and innovation at DGAgri). He alluded to the fact that it was very timely and in any case said he would be very interested in what UEAA would have to say.
He then asked B Bourget to read and explain the UEAA position on the future of the CAP.

2. **The UEAA position on the future CAP**

See Annex and comments made by the UEAA Steering Committee members at its previous meeting on the same day before this one with the Commissioner (see on this UEAA web site).

[1] The first part of the UEAA meeting was that held in the Liaison Office of the Tuscany region, the same day and the minutes released independently

3. Response from the Commissioner Ph. Hogan

As a general statement, he definitely indicated that his goal was to do more and better for the future CAP to the European farmers' benefits.

He then roughly followed the list of the bullet points presented by the rapporteur of the UEAA meeting.

- Re. the place of environment and climate change in the framework of the CAP, he said that it was his intention to strengthen the environmental and ecological aspects of the CAP and in particular by implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- As the Rapporteur had mentioned the recent EU Task force on market report, he confirmed that he would be widely inspired by the ideas presented in this report. He particularly emphasized the facts that:
    - those markets should be more consumers oriented "the consumer is King",
    - the markets should be made more transparent and accordingly establish some market observatories for all EU products.
    - the policy of market orientation should be continued, but by taking into account the volatility of prices. That is why it is necessary to maintain the direct payments as a "cushion", combined with other stabilization measures in link with the EU market observatories.
    - the capping and reduction of direct payments for big farms should be progressive ("soft landing") in order to permit their adaptation.
- He is well aware of the world competition aspects and will be aiming at contributing to strengthen the producers' organizations – there might be some initiatives taken in this area in the near future. He also mentioned the fact that EU was competitive in many ways, happy to see that EU eventually succeeded in having commercial agreements with Canada but still fighting about Geographical Indications with Mexico, Japan, and South America and he was reasonably optimistic on these points. The E U certification schemes through the "European cultural food heritage" will be fully supported.
- He mentioned the fact that Food Safety was a key point too for the E U policy, imbedded in the Safety paradigm: healthy soils, healthy food, healthy farmers and healthy consumers.
- He reminded the UEAA group that he has the intention to maintain all kinds of social programs for the less favored people or disadvantaged kids: school schemes with free distribution of milk or vegetables and fruits etc.
- Research, innovation and knowledge transfer are deemed hugely important: precision agriculture, Big Data, Digitalization... particularly in the direction of small and medium sized farms (in the frame of the second pillar of the CAP), a lot of money goes to Member States for education and research and there is hope for more resources in FP 9.
- Re. bio-economy and circular economy, he would like the farmers to be part of the solutions.
- As far as the complexity of the CAP is concerned and as pointed out in the UEAA report, the commissioner said that the simplification, of course, was on the Agenda. However he stressed the fact that according to him, this is related to the way the member states take their own responsibilities. He did express the fact that "he was tired to hear: Brussels being blamed for everything", there must be a dual partnership, the member states and the EU. Of course there is quite a diverse variety of situations all across Europe. The member states are to take their own responsibility because they are in the best situation to take into account the regional diversities.
- Regarding the budget situation, the Commissioner was not optimistic reminding the group that Brexit might result in a cut of overall 5 billion of Euros. In addition there are quite a few new initiatives from the Commission which will need some money: defense, security, migration etc…

4. General discussion

Following the intervention of the Commissioner each delegation took the floor.
The main points discussed are the following:

- Sweden was considering as first priority to take into account the environment and climatic changes It was also mentioned the fact that according to their opinion the wide use of antibiotics in livestock definitely was a problem and that measures should be taken to make sure of its mitigation. Finally, for the sake of competitiveness, the need for research, innovation and technology transfer was most important.
- The Czech Republic representatives were concerned about the direct payments and the fact that the Czech Republic does have extremely large farms in place.
- The Romanian delegation insisted on maintaining the financial share from EU budget at the level of 2014-2020, measures to conserve and promote the cultural and natural heritage, the introduction into CAP of an educational, research-innovation-extension system and individualized measures in CAP regarding the conservation of natural resources: water, soil, biodiversity, genetic resources.
- The Italian delegation mentioned its great interest to promote the quality (*sensu largo*) of the products put on the market to satisfy the consumers.
- The French representative stressed the fact that it is absolutely necessary that the Commission gets the adequate tools to intervene in emergency as soon as a crisis starts. Usually the time of reaction is much too long and hence aggravates the level of the crisis as recently seen with the milk crisis.

After a last few words from the Commissioner, he thanked all members of the meeting for such an interesting discussion. He mentioned the fact that he very much appreciated the UEAA input and that there could be other occasions on which the UEAA could be called again for giving its own positon.

The meeting was adjourned at 18.00 hrs.

M Thibier
Paris, 6 October 2017.

Brussels 28 September 2017

UEAA Position on the future of the CAP

Approved by the UEAA Steering Committee at its 28 September meeting in Brussels

Officially presented to the EU Commissioner for Agriculture, Ph Hogan at Berlaymont House, Brussels, 28 September 2018

The Future of the CAP by the Steering Committee of the UEAA

A- The main issues for a CAP contributing to the global goals of UN for a sustainable development

1. The place of environment and climate change in the framework of the CAP
2-a, Increased price volatility and how to protect farmers from market risks, on top of weather risks
2-b, A CAP consistent with the other EU policies, protecting the consumers from diseases and ensuring food safety
3- The weak position of farmers in the food supply chain
4 - The competitiveness of the European farms in the world economy
5 The support of agriculture in the less favored areas
6- The complexity of the CAP rules
7- The challenge of the future of the CAP budget.

B- The UEAA proposals

1- Besides penalty regulations, increasing the share of payments targeted at environmental and climate services provided by different systems of production.
2- In line with the report of the Agricultural Market Task Force:
a, Improving the knowledge and the monitoring of the markets;
b, Making consistent risk management tools more attractive for farmers
c, Strengthening the economic power of the farmers in the supply chain
d, Improving the prevention and the management of crisis
3-a, Increasing the resources of EU research for agriculture
b, Enhancing the training of farmers and favoring innovations in order to improve the competitiveness of farms and to encourage a better use of natural resources, notably water, soil and biodiversity
4- Maintaining a special support for the agriculture in the less favored areas
5- Simplifying the rules of the CAP
6- Improving and promoting the quality of food products in link with public health
7- Measures to conserve and promote the cultural and natural heritage of rural areas.

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