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European Coexistence Bureau (ECoB) - Technical Working Group on Maize Crop Production

SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON CEREALS, OILSEEDS AND PROTEINS OF 20.06.2008

The work of the European Co-Existence Bureau Technical Working Group on Maize Crop Production is accompanied by a stakeholder consultation process, which involves, in particular, the relevant Advisory Groups managed by DG AGRI.

The Advisory Group on Cereals, Oilseeds and Proteins was consulted at its meeting of 20 June 2008, which was held at the DG AGRI premises in Brussels.

Composition of the Advisory Group on Cereals, Oilseeds and Proteins

The Advisory Group on Cereals, Oilseeds and Proteins was established by Commission Decision 2004/391/EC on the advisory groups dealing with matters covered by the common agricultural policy¹.

The following organisations are represented in this Advisory Group:

<u>Sectors / seats</u>	<u>Name of organisation</u>	<u>Number of seats</u>
<u>Farmers, agriculturalists & cooperatives / 25</u>	COPA-COGECA	23
	CPE	1
	CEJA	1
<u>Traders / 8</u>	CELCAA	8
<u>Industry / 8</u>	CIAA	8
<u>Workers / 1</u>	EFFAT	1

¹ OJ L 120/50 of 24.4.2004

Consumers / 1	BEUC	1
Environmentalists / 2	BEE/EEB Birdlife Forum for Nature WWF	2

Full names of abbreviations:

- COPA-COGECA: European Committee of Agricultural Producers and Co-operatives
- CPE: European Farmers Coordination
- CEJA: European Council of Young Farmers
- CELCAA: European Liaison Committee for the Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade
- CIAA: Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries in the EU
- EFFAT: European Social Partners of Agriculture
- BEUC: European Consumers' Organisation
- BEE/EEB: European Environmental Bureau
- WWF: World Wildlife Fund

Procedure of consultation:

The consultation was announced in written on 6 June 2008 to the Members of the Advisory Committee. Members received the Mandate for the European Co-existence Bureau and a Background Document outlining the work of the Technical Working Group on Maize Crop Production (see Annex 1).

At the meeting of 20 June 2008, DG AGRI made a presentation given covering the following main points (see Annex 2 for the presentation):

- An overview of co-existence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic agriculture;
- The Council conclusions of May 2006 that provide a mandate for the Commission for further work on co-existence;
- The work principles and structure of the ECoB;
- The aim of the Crop-specific guidance documents;
- The Technical Working Group for Maize Crop Production, its scope of work and draft timetable; and
- The stakeholder consultation process.

Concerning the last point DG AGRI explained that the present meeting marks the beginning of a longer consultation process of the Advisory Group. Members of the group will also be consulted on the reference documents for best practices for co-existence

measures in draft stage, once these are made available from the work of the Technical Working Group.

Following the presentation the floor was open to the participants of the meeting for comments, views and opinions on the ECoB mandate, work of the Technical Working Group on Maize Crop Production.

The participants were also invited to submit any kind of information they could consider useful as a contribution to the ECoB activities within the two following weeks after 20 June 2008.

Comments received during the consultation:

CIAA remarked that the Member States are already working on legislative approaches for co-existence and wondered what would be the value added by the development of further guidance, in particular considering the considerable time required for this process.

In response to this comment, DG AGRI explained that the Commission is responding to a mandate provided by the Council, which shows that Member States request further guidance on technical co-existence measures. There are significant differences between the technical co-existence protocols established by the Member States. For this reason, a reference document with a common standard could help the Member States in adapting their approaches to the latest state of knowledge in this field.

CELCAA observed that the work of ECoB currently only focuses on rather simple questions and leaves out the more complicated details. It was questionable whether Member States will be convinced to adapt their approaches now if the more complicated questions come up later on.

DG AGRI responded that it is indeed the aim of the current work plan to develop a first reference document for maize crop production, which could be seen as rather straightforward. Such a reference document is required due to the already on-going cultivation of GM maize in the EU. Should the work make good progress, the reference document could be finalised rapidly. Future working groups could then focus on further questions later on, such as establishing a reference document for co-existence in maize seed production, or covering other crops.

No written contributions have been received by DG AGRI.