

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Meeting with MEP Eickhout
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Chère [REDACTED] ...
For SANTE/4868...
Sorry!

Meeting between DG Anne Bucher and MEP Bas Eickhout (Greens, NL), Greens Coordinator, ENVI Committee – 11 September, 2019

EP: Bas Eickhout MEP

SANTE: Anne Bucher, [REDACTED]

Summary: a very general exchange of views on the issues of relevance to SANTE and the ENVI Committee, mainly in the context of the Green Deal. MEP Eickhout is not optimistic about improved relations between ENVI and AGRI. He sees the Green Deal as an opportunity to reset relations on some contentious issues – pesticides, NBTs etc. – if Commission can show a real willingness to move towards sustainability. If this is the case, and Commission comes up with some real initiatives, the MEP sees potential for good cooperation and positive outcomes over the next five years.

Detail:

The ENVI Committee

Bas Eickhout (BE) expects more interest and more expectations on health in the new ENVI Committee. If the Green Deal is to be credible, Commission will have to up their game and take the Parliament more seriously, including respecting deadlines. He expects the Greens to be more active in the new ENVI and notes that Renew Europe share some ideas with the Greens, already being seen in the Chair (Pascal Canfin). His initial hopes of an improved relationship with AGRI are dwindling as he sees how work on the CAP review is being handled. It seems to be a case of ‘business as usual’ in AGRI

Anne Bucher (AB) welcomed an increased focus on health. This could help to offset the reticence of Member States when it is discussed in Council. She queried EP views on the impact of environmental deterioration on health and suggested that closer alignment of work by the Agencies could help achieve progress on this.

BE replied that there is real concern about the ‘cocktail effect’ of exposure to chemicals from different sources.

The European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy

AB asked the MEP’s views on the commitments in the political guidelines of President von der Leyen. Where lies the space for discussion with ENVI? Much work is now ongoing within DGs and between DGs with a view to identifying possible work streams. Linkages with climate change, biodiversity, the circular economy etc are all in the mix. It’s a matter of identifying the building blocks and translating them into concrete actions. Consideration is being given to possible areas that could be amenable to targets. We

have this idea in the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides already – decreasing risk, increasing uptake of low-risk products.

BE said that whilst his Group, and ENVI generally, will try to extract as much sustainability as possible from the review of the CAP, considerable push-back can be expected from the Member States. In this case, they will look to the Farm-to-Fork Strategy to deliver. He expects the CAP to cause further divergence between Member States, as some will make serious attempts to introduce eco-schemes, whilst other won't bother. Targets will only work if they're clear. He queried what level of detail could be achieved within 100 days on the Green Deal.

AB expects that the first 100 days will see the setting of objectives and identification of the building blocks to set actions in progress.

New Breeding Techniques (NBTs) and other contentious issues

BE suggested that the Green Deal could herald a kind of reset in relations between the EP and the Commission on difficult issues. This would, however, be contingent on Commission demonstrating a real and visible commitment to change. Commission must be prepared to really address all issues related to sustainability in an open and transparent way. He suggested that the President's initiative could also offer opportunities to Commission services to now move on issues that were more difficult in the past. He is pessimistic on NBTs, expecting a repeat of the GMO debate, with polarisation of views. He advised against early discussion on NBTs as it would set the wrong tone for the Farm-to-Fork discussions. The Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides offers some openings, but implementation by Member States remains poor. A fresh look at Food Contact Materials by the Commission could give a good signal that there is an appetite for real changes.



inter-institutional Relations



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