

From: [REDACTED] (SANTE)
Sent: jeudi 12 décembre 2019 12:25
To: SANTE CONSULT-E3
Subject: Report of the meeting between Anne Bucher and IFOAM and NGOs - 27 November 2019 (SANTE/4927)

Meeting between Anne Bucher, Director General of DG SANTE, and IFOAM and NGOs

Date: 27 November 2019

Participants:

DG SANTE - Anne Bucher, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
IFOAM EU - [REDACTED] (GMOs, Patents & Seeds)
Greenpeace European Unit - [REDACTED] (Democracy and Food)
Arche Noah - [REDACTED]
Friends of the Earth Europe - [REDACTED] (Food and agriculture [REDACTED])
European Coordination Via Campesina - [REDACTED]

New genomic techniques

The visitors welcomed the legal clarity that the CJEU ruling brought and conveyed their appreciation that the Commission has proactively discussed the implementation issues with the Member States. They underlined the importance for the organic sector to have a traceability system in place for products obtained with new techniques along the whole food chain. They inquired on why the COM has not proactively developed detection methods for specific products marketed in third countries or taken other measures such as setting up a database to collect information on new products or new protocols/certification mechanisms for exporters from third countries to follow.

COM replied that in addition to discussions with the MS, COM also mandated the EU Reference laboratory (EURL), together with the European Network of GMO laboratories to look into the detection possibilities, first for plants, for which a report now exists. The work is now on going concerning GMMs and will be followed by animals. COM noted that official controls are under MS responsibility and that COM has informed in bilateral meetings and in correspondence third countries and their food business operators on the CJEU ruling and on the need to fully respect the EU legislation. COM recalled that detection methods must be provided in the application for a GMO authorisation, and that the role of the EURL is to validate the detection methods for such products.

On risk assessment, the visitors inquired about the status of EFSA work on SDN-1 and -2 mandates and stated that in their view, there can be no lowering of risk assessment standards for NGT products. COM replied that work is advancing well on SDN1 and SDN2.

On the Council request for a study under Article 241, the visitors inquired on the general framing of the study, its contents and the consultation process involved, as well as their interested to be involved. In their view certain topics should be included, such as implementation, traceability, patents on seeds and need to maintain control of own seeds as well as human rights of farmers under the UN declaration.

COM replied that the study frame, content and consultation process are currently being discussed and noted the interest for the consultation.

Production and marketing of plant reproductive material

The visitors welcomed the possible amendment of the seed legislation and stressed the need to move to more biodiversity taking into account small scale farmers and heterogeneous material.

Concerns were expressed about the short time frame for the study requested by Council compared to the NGT study and the available resources for the work knowing the work on plant health matters, organic heterogeneous material and organic varieties.

COM explained that the PRM legislation has a history and thus work will not be started from scratch compared to NGT. It was further informed that any work would be based on the Council and EP positions by possibly carrying out very focused and targeted amendments. The study requested by the Council will be an update and will also cover new questions. It was stressed that the new Commission will decide whether to take up this project. A good cooperation with EP would be needed with a possibility to test EP in advance. Further COM informed about the Green Deal including the Farm to Fork strategy in which seeds play an important role in relation to e.g. adaptation to climate change and developing more sustainable and holistic food systems. The strategy has citizens in its focus and health too.

The visitors expressed the wish to send comments, confirmed the importance of impacts of climate change and the development of e.g. material resistant against pathogens, heterogeneity vs. monoculture, selection of varieties and in general the development of more holistic farm approaches and as regards national food systems a more systematic approach.