



Meeting report

GROW – Mars, incorporated, 11 June 2019

GROW met Mars Incorporated, at their request, to discuss priorities and ideas for the next five years of the Commission work in the food and drink sector.

Mars briefly presented their company, emphasising their significant economic involvement in the European market (32 factories, 20 thousands direct jobs in Europe). Mars stressed their support for the global free trade, and the Single Market, distancing themselves from the position of the current US administration. Mars emphasised the importance of bringing down the trade barriers for food and praised the Commission's work in this area.

Mars pointed out that single market is being challenged from many angles. They particularly consider the fragmentation of country of origin labelling as a worrying trend. CP explained that the Juncker Commission was very closely listening to the consumer voices on many issues, including dual quality and food labelling. The overwhelming support for origin labelling among the EU citizens, influenced the Commission decision do not oppose the experimental schemes in various Member States.

Mars brought up the issue of the CJEU last year's judgment on mutagenesis, according to which the modern plan breeding techniques have to follow the strict GMO approval path. According to Mars, the judgment has severe effects on the ongoing research in this area, which is crucial to the competitiveness of the European industry. Mars hinted that various Member States shown keen to change the legislative framework, in view of the judgment. CP explained that this is an issue that SANTE is working on at this moment and he is not aware of details for next steps.

Mars informed GROW that they would welcome more legal clarity on the issue of territorial supply constraints, however they do profoundly disagree with the retailers on their definition. CP stated that territorial supply constraints are a real problem for single

market, as the recent AB InBev case has shown, and should be addressed by appropriate means.

Mars informed GROW about its sustainability plan, and explained that the stakeholders of Mars are very keen to see a quick progress on the environmental actions of the company. GROW stated that the plastic strategy is a revolutionary tool in this context, and it has a potential to make a real difference in many value chains including food sector.

asked Mars, whether they have noted any economic damages related to the Swiss private subsidy fund for chocolate exports. Mars promised to research the topic and follow up on it via email.

requested the opinion of Mars on the offensive side of chocolates and biscuits in the context of Free Trade Areas negotiations. Mars confirm its support for considering those products as offensive.

Participants:

GROW: Director Carlo Pettinelli (CP), (D3), (D3)

Mars Incorporated:

Landmark public affair (Mars consultant): /