

International Unit
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Report CAP meeting, 25 March 2008

Introduction

About 60 people attended the CAP meeting in Brussels. This was the first meeting with the objective to try finding a possible common position regarding the future of the CAP. The dominant country represented was France. Northern representatives came from Sweden, Finland, Holland and United Kingdom.

Session 1

First **Mrs Gendreau**, vice president and portfolio holder from Aquitaine region welcomed everyone and made an effort to describe the issues including objectives and also mentioning deadlines for the coming months. The publication of the legal proposal regarding the future of CAP will be presented by the Commission on May 20th 2008. On October 23 it will also be a big event with commissioner Fisher-Boel and it will be a joint COR/CPMR event.

Xavier Gizard, General Secretary, described further how the CAP issues will be of great importance in GA 2009. By that time the road map will be set for 2013 and beyond. A policy position of CAP will be discussed in Rhodes on 27 June in the political bureau.

Patrick Anvroin continued by showing a short summary of the paper submitted for the meeting.

In short the position paper stated that

- CAP must play a role in maintaining employment and ensure correct balance revenues among farmers and contribute to sustainable development.
- CAP's first pillar must be balanced between territories and more regionalization is needed. CAP should though not be a territorial policy. Future CAP 1st pillar should be at the level of individual farmers. 2nd pillar should deal with issues such as bio diversity and economic efficiency.
- The cohesion policy should support rural development and should be a specific strand in the territorial excellence policy.
- The regions need more visibility, should the Committee of Regions be strengthened in this matter? Another big issue is also the greening of CAP which should be going further than cross compliances.

The meeting was joined by **Andrew Schneider**, analyst from the European parliament (EP). He explained the EP answer to the "Health check".

EP wants full decoupling on plants, but not full decoupling on animals (Sweden shares a lot of the position but wants to go further demanding full decoupling as soon as possible). Support should not be taken away from areas that are dependent on one particular business ex in mountain areas. The EP also suggests that Article 69 which deals with regionalisation should be more prominent. Further, EP wants to see a flat rate model and is also for a moderate modulation. In the future, the EP wants more simplifications and believes that energy crops should not receive support. Cross compliances should stay and milk quotas should be faced out.

A few regions from the audience spoke up and asked questions to Mr Schneider. **Christel Liljeström, Itä-Uusimaa** asked about employment issues. She described that the family farms are of vital importance, and wondered what the future is for them. She also asked about less favoured areas. These have today a special status. She was reassured by Schneider and Mrs Gendreau that these issues will not be lost in the future discussions. In Finland some areas receive state aid for certain parts of the country.

Another suggestion from the Finnish representatives was to combine pillar 1-2. The issue of a possible “Co financing” is also ok from Finland.

The British representative from **Devon** continued to ask what the purpose of CAP is. He thought the issue was hard discussing unless CPMR could agree on one purpose. Also he wondered if farms that are doing well should continue to receive support.

Session 2

The general discussion after break suggested improvements on the proposed paper.

The suggestions included

Clear view of regional models

The meaning of SFP

Ceiling issues regarding employment

Meeting the challenges of food objective and food of tomorrow

Market regulations are these necessary

Combining the two pillars

ERDF for rural development

International food to be connected to bio energy/ bio fuels

Discussions about this issue with other regions in the world

Region of Bretagne thought that the first challenge is to feed the people, food quality is important and so are market regulations. He received support from the Tuscany representative. **Region Västra Götaland** then continued with that some of the conclusions in the policy paper are not accurate. It is not the Northern countries that have greater support from pillar 1 it is the other way around. CAP is also a global question and the CAP needs to be competitive. **Mecklenburg Vorpommern** then talked about the issue of capping which Germany is not in favour of.

Conclusion

It will be a draft working group trying to improve the policy position.
Members of the WG will have a meeting in Paris on April 22.

The topics to be addressed by the WG include

Common food policy

Regional governance policy

Keep agricultural dimension, highlighting the quality aspect

Market management tools