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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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AGRI 65**

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: delegations

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Subject: Partial summary record of the meeting of the European Parliament **Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)** held on 27 January 2014

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- Items 3, 4 and 5 on the agenda

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The meeting focused on discussing amendments tabled by the members of the Committee related to two proposals on "animal health" and "protective measures against pests of plants". Both files are highly complex and technical. The rapporteurs presented some areas for possible compromises, but no concrete compromise amendments could be tabled at this stage.

In relation to item 5 on the agenda, "plant reproductive material", the AGRI Committee discussed the possibility of rejecting the Commission proposal in its entirety.

The meeting was chaired by Mr DE CASTRO (S&D, IT).

***Item 3 on the agenda***

**Animal Health**

AGRI/7/12809

\*\*\*I 2013/0136(COD) COM(2013)0260 – C7-0124/2013

Rapporteur: Marit Paulsen (ADLE) PR – PE514.757v01-00

Responsible: AGRI\* –

- Consideration of amendments

The rapporteur on this proposal, Ms PAULSEN (ALDE, SE), said that around 780 amendments to the draft report had been tabled. Given the complexity of the file and the large number of amendments, no compromise amendments could be presented yet.

The rapporteur mentioned the following main areas where amendments to the proposal would be necessary:

- amend the title to better reflect the real substance of the proposal (prevention and control of animal diseases transmissible both to animals and to humans);
- exclude cloning from the proposal;
- animal transport: include a scientifically proven timeframe and take better account of conditions of transport rather than introduce the eight-hour limit;
- transfer powers for regulating the health of bees to veterinary experts;
- include the non-commercial transport of pet animals in the scope of the legislation;
- other relevant areas, such as antimicrobial resistance, stray and abandoned animals.

In the ensuing debate, Ms JEGGLE (EPP, DE) agreed with the rapporteur on most of the points mentioned, except on transport, which she thought should not be dealt with in this proposal.

Concerning the voluntary programmes for disease elimination, she believed it would be sufficient if Member States were obliged only to notify the Commission instead of asking it for authorisation.

Mr SMITH (Greens/EFA, UK) also supported Ms PAULSEN in most of the proposed amendments. He mentioned, however, some areas where he saw the need to table further amendments which related in particular to the electronic identification of animals, discards and animal transport.

Ms AYUSO (EPP, ES), unlike Ms JEGGLE, was of the view that the issue of animal transport should be dealt with in this proposal. On the other hand, she believed that it was inappropriate to include provisions on antimicrobial resistance and referred to an existing "Action plan against the rising threats from Antimicrobial Resistance" covering this important issue.

Mr WOJCIECHOWSKI (ECR, PL) pointed to the issue of stray animals which caused a serious problem in some Member States. He thought one solution could be to set EU-wide minimum standards on how to deal with stray animals.

Ms REIMERS (ALDE, DE) spoke on the issue of disease prevention: she believed it was more effective to take harmonised EU-wide action, although applying a regional approach also played an important role in the eradication of diseases. On the issue of delegated acts, Ms REIMERS was very critical: she regarded the tabling of around 180 delegated acts only a few months before the end of the parliamentary term as disrespectful of democracy.

In reply, the Commission representative said that the scope and title of the proposal could be improved to better reflect the objective of the proposal which was not animal welfare.

With regard to animal transport, the Commission's intention was to regulate this issue from the point of view of disease transmission. The Commission representative said that there should be enough leverage left for national authorities to regulate animal transport taking place within Member States.

As to stray animals, the Commission representative stressed that the Commission was well aware of the gravity of the problem and he referred to a letter sent by Commissioner Borg to the Romanian Minister on this issue. It was established that the EU had no powers to control the current situation of stray dogs. In the context of the proposal the Commission's objective was to control animal disease but since dogs were not considered agricultural animals, the problem of stray animals went beyond the scope of this draft regulation.

In connection with antimicrobial resistance, the Commission representative explained that the Commission was trying to improve control over this phenomenon. In drafting the proposal it had merely used the text from existing food legislation.

The vote in Committee is scheduled for 11 February 2014.

#### ***Item 4 on the agenda***

##### **Protective measures against pests of plants**

AGRI/7/12789

\*\*\*I 2013/0141(COD) COM(2013)0267 – C7-0122/2013

Rapporteur: Hynek Fajmon (ECR) PR – PE522.767v01-00

Responsible: AGRI –

Opinions: ENVI – Oreste Rossi (EPP) PA – PE521.552v01-00

JURI (AL) – Evelyn Regner (S&D)

- Consideration of amendments

The rapporteur on this dossier Mr FAJMON (ECR, CZ), announced that around 330 amendments to the proposal had been tabled. He mentioned that also the ENVI as well as the JURI Committees had delivered an opinion.

Mr FAJMON stated that he envisaged only a small number of areas where it could be possible to table compromise proposals due to the disparate and contradictory amendments that had been introduced. He mentioned the following three areas for possible compromises: i) territorial scope of the proposal; ii) procedure to be applied for amending the list of pests (either by ordinary legislative procedure or by delegated acts); and iii) establishment of a positive or a negative list of plant pests.

In the discussion Mr TARABELLA (S&D, BE), speaking on behalf of Mr ANDRIEU (S&D, FR), referred to the deficient system of plant inspections for plant imports. He regretted that the Commission had not proposed any improvements to the current policy and called for a new, stricter strategy based on the assessment of phytosanitary risks connected to all plants imported into the EU. He proposed establishing a list of plants authorised or not authorised for import and their origin.

In connection with the interdiction of plant imports, Mr BOVÉ (Greens/EFA, FR) warned against creating a barrier to trade under the pretext of phytosanitary health. He believed that the role of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) could become more important in this context.

Ms AYUSO (EPP, ES) and Ms HERRANZ GARCÍA (EPP, ES) called on the Commission not to legislate on exports as this could put at risk bilateral agreements Member States had with third countries which were very difficult to achieve. With regard to import of plants, Ms HERRANZ GARCÍA suggested drawing up a positive list of countries that can be imported from.

Ms REIMERS (ALDE, DE) stressed it was important to achieve simplification and harmonisation with this regulation, keeping in mind the aim of reducing of bureaucracy and administrative burden. In addition, she wished to ensure more transparency and predictability for farmers. Commenting on delegated acts, she took a negative view and warned against undermining confidence in the EU institutions.

In response to the question on an open or closed strategy vis-à-vis imports of plants, the Commission representative, (Mr POUDELET, Director, DG SANCO), said that the Commission was in favour of an open system that should enable shorter reaction times. He explained that a closed system involving more inspections and controls would be very difficult to achieve, would increase the organisational and administrative workload and would finally entail an increase in costs.

Concerning delegated acts listing plant pests, the Commission representative explained that it was important for the Commission to have some flexibility in adding/removing pests from the list. At the same time, he underlined that it was a democratic process since both Council and Parliament had the opportunity to raise objections to a delegated act, if they wished to do so.

The vote in Committee is scheduled for 11 February 2014.

### ***Item 5 on the agenda***

#### **Production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material**

(plant reproductive material law)

AGRI/7/12787

\*\*\*I 2013/0137(COD) COM(2013)0262 – C7-0121/2013

Rapporteur: Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE) PR – PE514.766v01-00

Responsible: AGRI\* –

- Consideration of amendments

This item was debated in the absence of the rapporteur, Mr SILVESTRIS (EPP, IT).

The Chair of the AGRI Committee, Mr DE CASTRO (S&D, IT), explained that around 1461 amendments to the Commission proposal had been tabled some of which aimed at rejecting the proposal in its entirety. Mr DE CASTRO added that the question of rejecting the Commission proposal had already been the subject of a coordinator's meeting at which the majority of political groups had appeared willing to support this approach.

The absence of the rapporteur provoked some controversy among the Committee members, some of whom sharply questioned the utility of putting this item on the agenda and debating it. (Ms REIMERS (ALDE, DE), Mr HÄUSLING (Greens/EFA, DE) and Ms GIRLING (ECR, UK)).

Ms AYUSO (EPP, ES) believed that the EP should not reject the proposal outright as it could serve as basis for further work. She considered that the number of delegated and implementing acts in the text was excessive. Moreover, she asked for a better definition of micro-companies and for forest reproductive material not to be included in the proposal.

Ms KLASS (EPP, DE) agreed with Ms AYUSO in continuing the work on the text. She pointed to the great number of definitions which needed further clarifications.

Mr BOVÉ (Greens/EFA, FR) said that it was not possible to finalise work on this proposal in this parliamentary term and also stressed the need for an in-depth examination and debate. Mr DESS (EPP, DE) and Mr JAHR (EPP, DE) agreed and asked for the proposal to be debated in the next parliamentary term since there was no need to take immediate action.

Ms KADENBACH (S&D, AT) was particularly worried about the preservation of traditional varieties and free access to the market. She asked the Committee for support to reject the Commission proposal.

Ms KADENBACH (S&D, AT), Ms KLASS (EPP, DE) and Mr JAHR (EPP, DE) noted that due to the merger of 12 directives into one single regulation would diminish Member States' leeway considerably. Ms KLASS (EPP, DE) and Mr JAHR (EPP, DE) asked the Commission to explain why the 12 directives were being merged into one regulation.

The Commission representative (Mr POUDELET, Director, DG SANCO) responded to the question concerning the merger of the 12 directives into one regulation by indicating that the 12 directives were adopted at different points in time over a period of 45 years and were very different in their underpinning principles. In addition, the transposition in national legislation posed problems as it happened in non-harmonised ways which hindered intra-community trade. In order to avoid these two problems, the Commission had decided to propose one regulation which would be binding on all Member States.

The Commission representative also spoke on the issue of micro-companies and alternative production which the Commission did want to sustain while it also wanted to promote innovation relating to new varieties (e.g. facilitate registration of new seeds).

In relation to conventional seeds, traditional varieties and niche market material, it was important to the Commission to create clear and simple provisions in order to assure that they were followed uniformly.

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