

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

EU Summit - Concretely, little progress was made during the European Summit on 8-9/03 in support of the Lisbon Agenda. Beyond an overall positive assessment of what has been achieved and an expression of support for what still needs to be done, few decisions were taken. For example, leaders agreed to 25% reduction of administrative burden at EU level by 2012, but Member States made no specific national commitment. Most of the efforts were put in agreeing on a very ambitious package for Europe in favour of an integrated climate and energy policy which will be challenging for European business. On renewable energies, as part of this Energy Action Plan, the Council endorsed a binding target of a 20% share of renewable energies in overall EU energy consumption by 2020 and a 10% binding minimum target to be achieved by all Member States for the share of biofuels in overall EU transport petrol and diesel consumption by 2020. A certain conditionality -related to sustainability, second-generation biofuels and to the Fuel Quality Directive- has been, incorporated, as suggested by the Energy Council.

Food Improvement Agents Package

Additives - The additional amendments to the Westlund draft report on food additives in the EP ENVI Committee are now available. All of the CIAA proposed amendments have been tabled. However, and as expected, there are a number of amendments that go against the industry position, notably those aiming to maintain the co-decision procedure as opposed to comitology for modifications to the annex and various amendments placing additional restrictions on the conditions of use.

Common authorisation procedure - The additional amendments to the Westlund draft report on the common authorisation procedure in the EP ENVI Committee are also available. The key CIAA amendments, notably on the reduction of the period of time from 9 to 6 months for the Commission to submit a draft regulation for authorisation under the comitology procedure and the consultation of stakeholders in the drafting phase have been tabled. However, amendments have also been tabled calling for the co-decision procedure as opposed to comitology for updates to the Community list.

On the basis of the amendments, CIAA will now draft a voting recommendation in view of the vote in the ENVI Committee on the 2 reports above which is scheduled for 11/4.

EP Hearings on Plant Protection Products

CIAA Attends EP Hearings on Plant Protection Products- CIAA has recently attended three public hearings on Plant Protection Products (PPPs) in the European Parliament, hosted in preparation for the upcoming first reading of the new EU legislation in this area. One, titled "The future European policy on the authorisation and use of plant protection products", was hosted by MEP Christa Kläss (EPP, Germany), Rapporteur for the Directive establishing a framework for community action to achieve a sustainable use of pesticides, and MEP Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (EPP, Luxembourg), Shadow

Rapporteur for the Regulation concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market, on 08/02. This hearing featured presentations by the NGO Pesticides Action Network, farmers, European Commission and industry representatives alike, including one by the Joint Food Chain Roundtable, of which CIAA is a member. On 07/03, CIAA attended a Parliamentary hearing titled "Pesticide use reduction for better health", organised by Pesticides Action Network Europe, and hosted by MEP Hiltrud Breyer (Greens, Germany), Rapporteur for the aforementioned Regulation. Although the panel did not include industry or Commission representatives, both made themselves available to address the concerns expressed by panellists.

In addition to the above, on 05/03, CIAA attended the hearing "Safe food and healthy environment - the future of plant protection in the EU", hosted by the Parliament's Socialist Group, and chaired by MEP Dan Jørgensen, Socialist Shadow Rapporteur on the "pesticides package" for the Environment Committee. Panellists at this hearing again included representatives from industry, NGOs and government officials with other positions being put by the audience participants.

Trade

Export Refunds - Discussions between Commission services continue with the aim of trying to solve the question of whether and how export refunds on sugar contained in processed products can continue to be paid after October 2007. DG Enterprise presented the state of the discussions at the last Non Annex 1 Management Committee meeting. The legal problem is rather complex. Several options have been proposed by DG Enterprise to solve the problem, but no decision has been taken yet, they are still under scrutiny. It seems now unlikely that a solution will be found in March, as announced. There is no indication either for the moment on when the discussions can be concluded.

Russian meat import ban - Just weeks after Russian sanitary inspections in Poland, Moscow is considering again to ban imports of animal products originating in some EU Member States. The import ban is threatened to be put into place by 31/03 in case Russian officials are not provided with "EU veterinary residue control plans" in due course. EU Member States must submit those to the Commission by end of March, which could be a problem in terms of timing. Russia is primarily concerned about safety control lapses in 2006, where Italian beef was sent via France to Russia and problems with meat products from Hungary. Additionally, some meat exports from Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands were reported to be infected with salmonella in 2006. A possible import ban is unlikely to apply to the entire EU but rather to those countries which will not have provided requested information.

DDA negotiations - Negotiations of the WTO Doha Development Round did not yield a breakthrough when G4 negotiators - EU, US, India and Brazil - met with WTO Director General Pascal Lamy on 3-5 March in London and Geneva. EC Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson spoke from "slow and steady progress", but there seems to be no major advance on modalities or definite guidance on tariff and subsidy cuts. Meanwhile, outgoing French President Chirac criticised Mandelson of "selling European farmers". On technical issues, a proposal by the Cairns Group on sensitive products has been circulated, which foresees for developing countries a deviation of 2/3 of the regular tariff and a 2/3 quota expansion. Discussion on trade facilitation seem to advance without major problems.

Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU
Avenue des Arts, 43 - B-1040 Brussels

Publication: S. Naccachian. Tel: +32 2 514 11 11 - Fax: +32 2 511 29 05 - E-mail : ciaa@ciaa.be