

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Food Improvement Agents Package

On 22-23 May a CIAA delegation met with a number of key MEPs from different political groups and political group staff in Strasbourg on the Food Improvement Agents Package. The meetings were very constructive and timely and allowed for an open exchange of views on the CIAA position on the various reports as adopted by the ENVI Committee and on how the EP intends to proceed in view of the plenary session. As far as the timetable for adoption of first reading is concerned, no decision has yet been taken as to whether the package will go to the 18-21 June session as currently scheduled. The 3 rapporteurs are to meet in early June to decide how to move forward and also to discuss the possibility of trying to get first reading agreements with the Council. On the key issues, CIAA highlighted the need to ensure consistency on the parallel provisions across the different proposals and explained in detail the points of key concern in the various reports. Comitology remains a sensitive issue with MEPs reluctant to see the EP lose co-decision powers, but recognising that technical provisions may be better dealt with under the comitology procedure, providing that the EP has a scrutiny right. In view of the information gained during these meetings, CIAA should assume that first reading could still take place in June and continue to lobby accordingly.

Trade

WTO Doha Round negotiations - EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson welcomed on 17/18 April in Brussels the US representative for trade, Susan Schwab, the Brazilian minister Celso Amorim and the Indian minister Kamal Nath, in order to advance WTO DDA negotiations. All core negotiating areas were discussed with a particular focus on agriculture, NAMA and services, but no major breakthrough was achieved despite the presence of WTO chairman of the agricultural committee Crawford Falconer. In a press release, the G4 report to have held productive discussions and to remain committed to a successful conclusion of negotiations by the end of this year.*** A CIAA delegation led by J. L. Pelletier, Chair of the TCO Committee, met on 14 May with representatives from EU, US, Brazil, Switzerland, Germany and the WTO in Geneva to assess the state of progress in the DDA negotiations. These experts in agriculture negotiations appeared overall sceptical about the likely contribution of the G4 to reach a breakthrough on the key issues that are: US domestic support, EU market access and developing country market access. The discussions provided also some insights into the various appreciations of Falconer's "challenges paper"; all considered the paper to be a helpful assessment of negotiations but adding that in identifying possible "landing zones", the Chair of the Agriculture negotiation had been partial by being vague and putting less pressure on certain issues and hence on certain members. The second instalment of the Falconer paper, expected to include issues not covered by the first paper, was due for release during the OECD week starting on 14 May but has been delayed due to the ministerial meetings.

EC Impact Assessment

According to officials from the Secretariat General, the consultation carried out last year on impact assessments has not revealed major shortcomings of the process of stakeholder consultation. The Commission will hold a stakeholder event on 28 June to inform about the impact assessment in general, to present the outcome of the evaluation and to provide information on the activities of the impact assessment board which was established in November 2006. The Commission will present a communication on the external Evaluation of the Community's IA system before the end of the year in preparation of the 2008 Spring European Summit that will be held on Better Regulation, in particular on Impact Assessment.

Upcoming publications and events

In June, the Memorandum to the Portuguese Presidency will be published as well as the revised Data & Trends Brochure 2007. These publications will be made available on our website for download.*** On 26/27 June, the 3rd Annual Obesity Europe Conference will take place. Sabine Nafziger, Director Consumer Information - Diet & Health Issues at CIAA, will give a keynote presentation on industry's actions with regard to obesity.