

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Second Stakeholders' Meeting of the ETP "Food for Life", 13 September 2007, Brussels
Marking another key milestone in its work programme, the European Technology Platform (ETP) "Food for Life" officially launched the European Strategic Research Agenda and agreed on a draft implementation plan outlining specific activities (continued below...)

Second Stakeholders' ETP meeting

...Over 190 opinion leaders, public authorities, academics and industry representatives gathered during a conference in Brussels on 13/09. This meeting was instrumental in defining priorities and setting specific actions to strengthen innovation processes, improve knowledge transfer and stimulate competitiveness across the European food chain.

By promoting the development of novel and improved food products, the ETP Food for Life aims to add "life to years" by studying the links between diet and brain activity, immune and intestinal functions and metabolic function. It will also seek to identify ways of building consumer trust in the food chain through up-front design and by the identification and promotion of best practices in sustainable food production.

"The level of enthusiasm and interest from all stakeholders of the ETP 'Food for Life' has continued to increase, and this is reflected in the outstanding attendance at this year's conference," stated Peter van Bladeren from Nestlé and Chairman of the ETP Board. For more information about ETP 'Food for Life', please visit <http://etp.ciaa.eu>.

Ingredients

Ingredients Expert Group assesses the state of play with regard to FIAP

On the occasion of its first meeting following the summer break, the CIAA Ingredients Expert Group met on 11/09 to review progress made concerning the package of legislative proposals affecting food additives, flavourings, and enzymes, known as the Food Improvement Agents Package (FIAP), and to agree on a way forward. The Commission's initial proposal, which also calls for a common authorisation procedure for these products, had since undergone a first reading by the European Parliament and has been reviewed in detail by the Council.

Participants of the expert group reviewed the Parliament's amendments in light of CIAA's initial positions with regard to the proposals, also taking into account the Commission's position on the Parliament's amendments as well as the Council's position as it had developed. The Portuguese presidency has drafted suggestions for compromises, and a Council meeting was held on 17-18/09 to discuss the issue.

At the 11/09 expert group meeting, participants identified areas where further progress was desirable and considered which actions might be appropriate to progress most effectively toward an acceptable common position.

CIAA and/or its members will continue their position sharing with the different institutions as appropriate in recognition of the proposals' importance to the food and drink industry. While a decision has not yet been reached, a second reading in the European Parliament is expected to take place in the first half of 2008. Meanwhile, activities in the Council are still underway, and negotiations will take place between the Parliament and the Commission.

Environment

Sustainable consumption and production

On 23/09, the Commission closed its stakeholder consultation on the upcoming Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), which DG Environment intends to table in early 2008. This Action Plan will propose concrete measures to improve the environmental performance in key sectors, including food and drink, transport and housing. The stakeholder consultation was based on a Background Paper on SCP, in which the Commission proposed 5 priority areas for future action: Leveraging innovation (linking R&D with industry), Better Products (e.g. eco-labelling, eco-taxation, eco-design), Cleaner Production (resource efficiency targets, eco-technology targets), Smarter Consumption (using retailers as environmental control point to ensure a "green" supply chain), Global Dimension (creating lead markets).

CIAA developed a fully-fledged stakeholder contribution to this consultation (see ENV/126/07) and will present its position on all key SCP topics in a stakeholder meeting on 02/10, organised by DG Environment.

In a related initiative, on 26/10 CIAA will launch its new Environment Publication "Managing Environmental Sustainability in the European Food & Drink Industries" in a stakeholder meeting bringing together representatives from the Commission, UNEP, COPA-COGECA, EuroCommerce, consumers, an environmental consultancy and an NGO. All interested CIAA members are invited to register for this meeting via the CIAA Secretariat (d.nickel@ciaa.eu) by 16/10.

WTO

Negotiations have re-launched in a multilateral process early September based on the proposals submitted in July by the Chairs of the Agriculture Committee and of the NAMA negotiations. According to Commissioner Mandelson, the chairs "*have done an honest job. They have distributed the pain fairly*".

Negotiations in agriculture have taken place in groups of varying sizes. There have been informal discussions in the so-called Room E discussion, in which roughly 36 WTO members participate. The discussions focused firstly on agricultural market access for developed countries, where countries have not been able to solve the issue of how to designate sensitive products. There have been meetings of a "core group" involving, at senior officials' level: EU, U.S., Brazil, India, Australia, Japan, Switzerland, and Argentina. This group started last week discussing the most sensitive issues, such as domestic support levels, treatment of sensitive products and special products exempt from formula cuts, the special safeguard mechanism for developing countries, and tropical products.

In a context of continued support from political leaders, discussions appear to have given delegates some sense of forward momentum. Discussions are expected to continue for one or two weeks, before a short phase of consultation with capitals. Falconer is likely to circulate a revised agriculture draft text in mid-October.

Administrative burden reduction

Last week the European Commission launched a new website (link below) to enable entrepreneurs to suggest ideas for how to reduce the administrative burdens they face. Together with the launch of the online consultation, European Commission Vice-President Günter Verheugen also announced that a contractor has been entrusted with measuring the administrative costs arising from European legislation and their implementation at national level. As announced two weeks ago, a high level group of stakeholders - to be chaired by Edmund Stoiber after he steps down as Bavarian Prime Minister - will advise on the ongoing work under the Action Programme for reducing unnecessary burdens.

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction>

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