

Request for Meeting and Documents into Strategic Inquiry OI/6/2014/NF - Annex II

Correspondence - 12/04/2017

Case OI/6/2014/NF - **Opened on** 12/05/2014 - **Recommendation on** 16/11/2017 - **Decision on** 14/11/2017 - **Institution concerned** European Commission (Recommendation agreed by the institution) |

Methodology used to produce Annex III

Choice of expert groups

In order to examine the quality of expert group minutes, fifteen expert groups were selected from eight Directorates-General of the Commission. These expert groups were chosen based on the member types present in the expert groups, namely:

- Type A members, who are individuals appointed in a personal capacity, acting independently and in the public interest;
- Type B members, who are individuals appointed to represent a common interest shared by stakeholders in a particular policy area; and,
- Type C members, which are organisations in the broad sense of the word, including companies, associations, NGOs, trade unions, universities, research institutes, law firms and consultancies.

The following expert groups were selected:

1. DG Agriculture and regional development (DG AGRI)

a. Expert Group for Agricultural Markets, in particular concerning aspects falling under the single CMO Regulation

b. CDG Arable crops



c. CDG Environment and climate change

2. DG Employment, social affairs and inclusion (DG EMPL)

a. ESCO

3. DG Environment (DG ENV)

a. Co-ordination group for Biodiversity and Nature

4. DG Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (DG FISMA)

a. Cross-border redress in financial services

b. European Post Trade Forum

c. Payment Systems Market Expert Group

5. DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)

a. Commission Expert Group on the social business initiative (GECES)

b. High Level expert Group on energy-intensive industries

c. Multi-Stakeholders Expert Group on eProcurement

6. DG Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)

a. Group of experts on restructuring and insolvency law

7. DG Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE)

a. European Sustainable Shipping Forum (ESSF)

b. Advisory body on accessibility of the EU rail system for PRM

8. DG Taxation and Customs Union (DG TAXUD)

a. VAT Expert Group

The minutes of expert group meetings can be found in the Register of Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities [1] . The minutes of two meetings were selected per expert group: the minutes of a meeting before 30 May 2016 [2] and the minutes of the most recent meeting.



We recorded basic information about the expert groups and the minutes, namely the name of the expert group, the E-number (a unique number given to each Commission expert group), the website of the expert group, and links to the two sets of minutes as well as the (draft) agenda. These minutes were then checked against a checklist of quality criteria (see below).

We reviewed the following:

- List of participants: Did the minutes contain a list of meeting participants?
 - Dissent noted: Did the minutes mention participants' dissenting opinions?
 - Comments attributed: Were comments attributed to specific members? Using an abbreviation to indicate who made a particular comment was accepted (e.g.: "NL noted that..."), since the specific member could be identified using the list of participants.
 - Action points or conclusions: Did the minutes contain clear action points, decisions or conclusions made by the expert group as a result of the meeting? (Note: Not all meetings have as a purpose to reach a specific decision or conclusion. However, the minutes should at least indicate that no specific decision or conclusion was taken or reached or that the nature of the meeting does not require this.)
 - Enough detail: Did the minutes contain enough detail so as to inform citizens how expert groups have reached a decision, opinion or conclusion?
- o This focused on whether one can determine from the minutes what the decision-making process was during the meeting and how the expert group dealt with each point on the agenda.
- Every point of agenda discussed: Did the minutes cover all the points as outlined in the (draft) agenda to the meeting?
- o Even if all points on the agenda were not discussed, this criterion was also checked so as to establish if the minutes mentioned that certain points were not discussed (for instance, due to time constraints).

We documented in an Excel spreadsheet (see Annex III) the basic data on expert groups as well as the criteria for checking the quality of minutes. We then analysed the meeting minutes and chose: "Yes", "No" or "*Other". This last category was for unusual cases which required additional explanations or which did not fit into a 'Yes/no' choice.

Lastly, the aggregate number for each of the three options was determined and displayed in a separate tab of the Excel spreadsheet ('overview' tab). This allows for a rather blunt comparison between the quality of the minutes before and after 30 May 2016.



[1] <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm> [Link]

[2] 30 May 2016 is the date on which the Commission adopted its Decision establishing new horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups.