

ZINCK Caroline

From: Mella Frewen [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 August 2014 15:25
To: Euro-Ombudsman
Subject: [EOWEB] Public consultation concerning the composition of European Commission expert groups
Attachments: DG02914.pdf

Expéditeur

Expéditeur Mella Frewen [REDACTED]
Date Friday, August 29, 2014 3:24:37 PM CEST

Vos informations

Partie 1 - Information sur l'expéditeur

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Langue de réponse souhaitée en - English

Partie 2 - Contenu

Sujet Public consultation concerning the composition of European Commission expert groups
Please find attached a letter from Mrs Mella Frewen, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope, in response to the public consultation concerning the composition of European Commission expert groups.

Best regards,

Contenu Maryline Crooijmans

PA to Director General

FoodDrinkEurope

DG/029/14E

European Ombudsman
1 Avenue du Président Robert Schuman
CS 30403
F - 67001 Strasbourg Cedex
FRANCE

Brussels, 29 August 2014

Re: Case OI/6/2014/BEH
The experience of the High Level Forum for a better functioning food supply chain

Dear Ms O'Reilly,

In the context of your consultation on Commission Expert Groups, we wish to share our views on a well-functioning structure, the High Level Forum for a better functioning food supply chain which we believe should be maintained for the agri food sector beyond its current mandate.

The background

The current mandate of the [High Level Forum for a better functioning food supply chain \(HLForum\)](#) results from Commission Decisions 2012/C 396/06 and 2010/C 210/03. The mandate is due to end on 31 December 2014.

It was set up by the European Commission to implement a roadmap of initiatives to improve the competitiveness of the agri-food industry in cooperation with the stakeholders. The DG Enterprise Commissioner is leading this exercise together with his fellow Commissioners in charge of Internal Market and Services, Health and Consumer Protection and Agriculture and Rural development.

Successor to the [High Level Group for the competitiveness of the agri-food sector](#), the HLForum has been active since 2009 and has proven to be a most unique, constructive and relevant structure to promote and tackle the competitiveness of the European food and drink industry.

The achievements

Over the years, the HLForum has advised the Commission on the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy Flagship Initiatives to support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the food supply chain and assist the Commission in developing an industrial policy for the agri-food industry. In particular the HLForum:

- facilitated the establishment of fairer business-to-business relationships within the sector through the very successful "supply chain initiative" (on-going) - **B2B**;
- undertook a study on possible impact of food taxes on the competitiveness on the food and drink industry - **FOOD TAXES**;
- carried out a "Regulatory Fitness check" of the food sector (evaluation of the General Food law - results expected for 2015) - **ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN**;

- led to the establishment of a structured Social Dialogue with EFFAT (European Federation for Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions) - **SOCIAL DIALOGUE**;
- developed a common vision (18 partners inc. WWF) for a more sustainable, innovative, inclusive and resource-efficient food supply chain - **SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHAIN**.

The tripartite structure

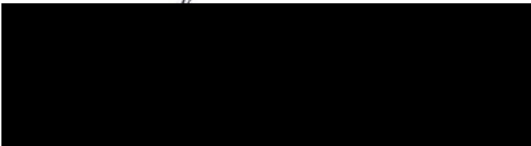
The structure of the Forum is tripartite and gathers representatives from : 1. Civil society - *Industry, Retail, Traders, Farmers, Environmentalists, Consumers....* 2. Commission services - *DG Ent, DG Sanco, DG Agri, DG Markt, DG Envi* 3. Member States - representatives from 21 countries. We are currently requesting the involvement of all 28 EU Members.

The achievements of the HLForum (see item above) could not have been possible if this cross-cutting structure was not in place. Moreover not only are all food and drink related policies tackled under one heading (holistic approach) but they also benefit from a simultaneous dialogue with all key stakeholders concerned.

The High Level Forum report (2012) underlined the added value of its structure by stating that “the Forum’s holistic approach has contributed to fostering cooperation within the sector and within public authorities involved...” and “...that isolated efforts to address structural issues would not yield long-lasting strategies and impacts.” (See *annex for a more extensive view of the report*.)

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Mella Frewen

Annex : Extract from the HLFForum 2012 report - pages 32 - 33

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Value-added of the Forum

The Forum considers the significant progress achieved so far on the roadmap as a very positive outcome of the process initiated with the High Level Group on the Competitiveness of the Agro-Food Industry. Now that there has been progress on most initiatives on the roadmap, the work needs to be assessed to envisage the way forward in line with recent developments.

The Commission has also consulted stakeholders on several initiatives in its roadmap through other expert groups in which industry and non-governmental organisations are represented, as well as through public consultations. Though duplication of work should be avoided to save resources, cross-fertilisation can deliver useful results when different groups work on the same issues from different perspectives. In comparison to other Commission expert groups dealing with food-related issues,⁵⁵ the composition of the Forum brings additional value by involving national authorities together with private stakeholders in a single group in which views can be exchanged in a transparent way.

This multistakeholder approach has proven particularly relevant insofar as the Forum's mandate covers initiatives from various stakeholders: EU institutions, national authorities, companies, trade associations, trade unions and civil society organisations. All have benefited from mutual information and consultation on their work. Stakeholders involved in or committed by the Forum's roadmap have continuously exchanged information and views on the implementation of all initiatives in a transparent manner.

The Forum has also identified and discussed new developments and emerging initiatives of importance for the sector (national food taxes, promotion of food sustainability, fight against food wastage, etc.). Through these activities, the members of the Forum have consistently sought to ensure a coherent, science-based approach to policies affecting the food supply chain, encompassing economic, social and environmental objectives.

Moreover, the Forum's holistic approach has contributed to fostering cooperation within the sector and within public authorities involved.

5.2. Proposals for a continued multistakeholder dialogue

The Forum calls on all institutional and private stakeholders to continue delivering on the roadmap wherever progress is still possible. The holistic, supply chain approach developed within the Forum should remain one of the main priorities for the agri-food sector.

The environment in which agri-food companies operate has changed since 2009. The economic crisis brought the need to have a structure that allows them to adapt flexibly to changes. The Forum is of the view that maintaining and reinforcing efforts of all stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth in the food supply chain is of the utmost importance.

The Forum sees significant value added in continuous consultation and exchanges of views with stakeholders and national authorities on any initiative affecting the

sustainability and competitiveness of the sector. It believes that isolated efforts to address structural issues would not yield long-lasting strategies and impacts.