

CIAA Flash

Publication addressed to CIAA members

Highlight

Parliamentary Hearing of New Executive Director of EFSA - The European Parliament Hearing of Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, the newly nominated Executive Director of EFSA, took place within the EP Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) on 23 February. Mrs Geslain-Lanéelle, who previously held the position of Vice-President of the Board of EFSA and Regional Director of Agriculture and Forestries in Ile de France, was nominated on 10 February to succeed Geoffrey Podger, who recently resigned from the role at EFSA's helm. Before being officially appointed, Mrs. Geslain-Lanéelle was required to undergo a hearing at the EP...continued on page 2

CIAA Submits Response to EFSA Survey

On 27/02, CIAA sent its response to an EFSA public consultation on a recently-published independent Evaluation Report on the Authority and its work. In its letter, CIAA stated that it supported the overall conclusions and recommendations of the Report, as these were generally in line with the CIAA evaluation of the Agency.

CIAA stated that in the short period of its existence, EFSA had built up a reputation of independence and credibility, but that to maintain this reputation, the hiring of more scientific staff, and the ensured participation of the required number of internationally recognised scientists on the Panels, was essential. In order to achieve this, increased and stable financial resources were needed. CIAA therefore expressed concern with regard to the suggested budget cut, and argued that it remained unclear whether or not the introduction of fees for scientific evaluations would overcome this. CIAA also expressed concern that by not systematically tapping into industry research, EFSA was failing to take advantage of a large part of available scientific knowledge and expertise. In conclusion, CIAA proposed that an appropriate risk benefits analysis, considering the points raised in the survey, should be undertaken before a final decision was made.

On the subject of communication, CIAA considered that there was still a need to improve interaction between EFSA and the risk manager, the Commission; to make a distinction between communication on risk assessment and on risk management; and to improve cooperation to avoid conflicting communications on food safety related issues.

CIAA expressed concern that the collection of data to identify, characterize and monitor emerging risks was not considered a priority and that EFSA lacked the staff to fulfil this task. Industry was therefore prepared to co-operate with EFSA in contributing to this pro-active work.

Finally, with regard to nutrition issues, CIAA recommended that these be part of EFSA's work

programme when they fall clearly within its risk assessment mandate, for example, in connection with developing legislation.

Claims

The additional amendments tabled to Mrs Poli Bortone's draft recommendation for second reading in the EP ENVI Committee are now available (269 in total). All of the industry requested amendments have been tabled. CIAA is drafting a voting recommendation setting out the industry's priorities in view of the vote in Committee on 21/03.

Waste Framework Directive (WFD)

Revision of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) - In the EP, first concrete steps in the co-decision on a revised WFD have been taken with the appointment of the rapporteurs. For the Thematic Strategy (TS) on waste, Johannes Blokland (Independence/Democracy Group) has been appointed rapporteur in the ENVI committee, which will be solely responsible for the drafting an EP opinion. For the revision of the WFD, Caroline Jackson (EPP) has been appointed rapporteur in the ENVI committee, while C. Gutierrez-Cortines (EPP) will be rapporteur for the Industry, Research and Energy committee (ITRE). A concrete timetable has not yet been set, but Ms Jackson wants the TS and the WFD to be on the agenda at the same time.

CIAA has finalised its position paper on the TS and the WFD, which contains the main CIAA arguments on by-products. The CIAA position has been submitted to the Austrian Presidency as well as to national representations in the Council in view of the first political debate on waste in the Council on 9 March. CIAA will hold personal meetings with the EP rapporteurs in the mid-March to advocate our position and discuss their potential involvement in a workshop on by-products in late April. CIAA has launched first constructive contacts with other like-minded trade federations with the aim to form a broad alliance on the by-product issue, preferably including UNICE.

Trade

Trade and competitiveness - DG Trade continues its dialogue with the civil society in preparation of the announced communication on Trade and Competitiveness which should be more specific in terms of policy orientations than the issue paper produced in September last year. CIAA contribution has been submitted in February. Scheduled initially for April 2006, the communication could be delayed until summer in order not to influence the WTO process.

WTO

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson visited US counterpart Rob Portman end of February in Washington in order to advance Doha Round negotiations and to discuss differences on market access of key agricultural products. Both representatives urged other WTO members to advance negotiations in NAMA and services and hinted that this could result in an increased offer in agriculture. A G6 conference (US, EU, Australia, Japan, Brazil and India) is scheduled on 10-11/03 in London which is hoped to unblock negotiations on agriculture.

Energy/Biofuels

On 08/03, the Commission published a Green Paper on developing a common and coherent European Energy Policy. Among the six priority areas which have been identified, the Commission tackled the development of renewable energy sources, including biofuels and proposes to elaborate a Renewable

Energy Road Map, based on a thorough impact assessment. Further to the consultation, the Commission will propose concrete measures. The European Energy Policy will be on the agenda of the Spring European Council on 23-24/03.

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....At the Hearing, Mrs Geslain-Lanéelle cited her wish to strengthen the internal structure and reactive capacity of the Parma-based Agency, but cautioned MEPs nonetheless that the Agency was "still in the development stage". Her other objectives included improving communication on food hazards, encouraging dialogue with risk managers, establishing effective networks with Member States, developing the international credibility of the agency, and strengthening ties with the EP. She repeatedly stressed the need to develop harmonised risk assessment methods in cooperation with national authorities.

On the subject of whether or not there should be total transparency in the experts' discussions, Mrs. Geslain-Lanéelle took the view that while this was a "legitimate" concern, she had "reservations" nevertheless, as this could inhibit and influence discussions.

Following the completion of the Hearing, the EFSA Management Board is now awaiting the receipt of a letter from the EP President. Taking the views of the ENVI Committee into account, the EFSA Management Board will then consider the formal appointment of Ms. Geslain-Lanéelle. This process is expected to be completed by mid-2006 at earliest.