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CELCAA SUPPORTS COMMISSION PROPOSAL ON REFORM OF PROMOTION BUT CALLS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

CELCAA, the European umbrella representing the traders' associations in agricultural products, welcomes the proposed promotion policy reform of the Commission published end of 2013.

European traders play a crucial role in the agri-food chain as they connect producers to consumers, through distribution capacities and services. Promotion policy is a tool which is of key interest for traders, as promotion policy can contribute to access new markets, on the internal EU market or globally.

Introduction

CELCAA supports the main objectives as stressed in the legislative proposal: to enhance competitiveness of European agriculture in both internal and third countries' market by increasing consumers' awareness of the merits of the EU agriculture products, and developing and opening up new markets. In that context, CELCAA notes with great satisfaction the increase in budget, from €61m in 2013 to €200m by 2020.

Targeting third countries' markets

CELCAA welcomes the orientation of the Commission to target promotion measures in priority to third countries' markets. In view of the FTAs being negotiated, third countries' markets have strong potential for growth for exports. Priority should therefore be given to programmes, including missions, fairs and exhibitions and market studies, in countries with whom the EU is negotiating or has recently concluded a FTA.

In that context, CELCAA welcomes the proposal to dedicate a substantial part of the budget to third countries' measures. The budget should be used in an efficient manner and priorities for the EU should be defined in close contact with the Consultative group on promotion and representatives of the organisations benefiting from these programmes.

Measures on the internal market

Considering the importance of the internal market, CELCAA believes that some promotion measures should be available for the internal market.

National co-financing

National co-financing should remain possible and optional in case of multi-countries and / or multi-products programmes targeting third countries' market. Indeed, such programmes support the European dimension and European products and in such cases, national co-financing that help contributing to strong budgets should not be prevented.

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Scope

Looking at the criteria set out in Art. 2.a, CELCAA believes that the positive list of the characteristic of food products for the internal market is too restrictive and should be indicative only. Operators should be in a position to liaise with the technical services to see if the theme they would like to deal with could fall under art. 2.a).

CELCAA supports information measures focusing on internal market and stresses that development of local and regional markets should be the responsibility of the Member States.

Technical support' services

CELCAA welcomes the orientation of the Commission to develop accompanying technical support services with a view to encouraging awareness of different markets; however the priority should be given to technical support devoted to improve the access of EU agricultural products into third-country markets.

Technical support services should include (non-exhaustive) organisation of web-platform to support best practices sharing, meeting potential partners to submit multi-countries and/or multi-products programmes, market statistics and market analysis and studies; analysis of barriers into entry of third countries' market;

Strategic EU priorities

While adopting a work programme setting out the EU priorities in terms of markets, products or messages to highlight, it is essential that the Commission closely collaborate with European operators, including traders' representatives.

Consultative group on promotion should be associated to the exercise of defining the work programme. Art. 25 should be therefore amended: 'In the context of implementing this Regulation, the Commission shall (and not may) consult the Advisory group on promotion'.

Administrative simplification for multi programmes

CELCAA welcomes the direction towards the administrative simplification through the management of multi-countries programmes via a one-stop system at Commission level. CELCAA has always called¹ for the management of one single EU-level authorities for multi-countries programme, so as to avoid administrative burden, complex and time-consuming processes. Streamlining administrative procedures and a clear determination of the responsibilities for the submission, evaluation, monitoring and control of the programmes is likely to result in a greater involvement of stakeholders in EU promotion programmes. Collaboration with European platform' organisations should be regular and exchange on good practices to improve formulation and implementation of programmes should be encouraged through seminars and conferences.

On the European agency responsible to assess the programmes, CELCAA would like to stress the important role of professional organisations and call for the regular consultation between the agency and these organisations.

Periodicity

European traders call for the possibility to introduce programmes twice a year. Presenting programmes only once a year leads operators to wait a whole year to re-introduce a programme, in case they need to adjust it. At least, a second deadline should be established for programmed rejected but to be 'corrected'.

¹ See CELCAA answer to Commission Green Paper on Promotion of Agricultural Products, 30.09.2011

Monitoring and evaluation

CELCAA welcomes the initiative to set up monitoring and evaluation tools that will score the programmes of promotion and ultimately provide indication to operators on how to best use promotion measures. CELCAA looks forward collaborating with the Commission on the list of indicators.

Wine

Wine should not be discriminated in terms of eligibility, themes, actions or beneficiaries compared to other agricultural products as a combined result of the recent reform of the Single CMO and the reform of the horizontal regulation on promotion. While the eligibility of wine in association with other agricultural or food products is welcomed, specific wine programs, in particular promoting responsible consumption patterns, should remain fully eligible.

CELCAA is an EU umbrella association representing EU organisations covering the trade in cereals, grains, oil, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, eggs, poultry and game, tobacco, spices and general produces. Members include CEEV, CIBC, COCERAL, EUCOLAIT, EUWP, FETRATAB, GAFTA EU, UECBV. CELCAA's main objectives are to facilitate understanding of European decision-makers and stakeholders on the role played by the European traders in agri-food products; to act as a platform of dialogue and communication with the European Institutions and to encourage public and general interests in agri-trade issues.