

CELCAA takes stock on agri-food trade and sustainability during Annual General Meeting and Field Trip to Uddel/Netherlands

CELCAA – The European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade held its Annual General Meeting with the leading theme "Reality Check for agri-food trade and sustainability" on July 12, 2023, in form of a field trip to the premises of "Van Drie Group" in Uddel/Netherlands. The event served as a stocktaking of current EU Green Deal and Farm-to-Fork (F2F) policies and their implications for agri-food trade on the ground. With a formal programme in the morning and a premises visit in the afternoon, the meeting was open to the public and was attended by more than 30 attendees from agri-food organisations from Brussels as well as the Netherlands, alongside the CELCAA member organisations.

Marcel van der Vliet, president of CELCAA and Sales and Ingredient Manager at Van Drie Group, flagged in his opening speech, that CELCAA's mission is to ensure that agri-food trade is recognised as an essential pillar of sustainable and resilient EU Food and Farming systems. He further underlined: "*As agri-food trade is an essential part of the EU food value chain, it needs realistic and predictable policy making to enable trade with all its sustainability components, such as in the optimisation process of valorising agri-produce, the increase of circularity, and the overall reduction of the footprint, amongst many others.*"

CELCAA Secretary General Nelli Hajdu highlighted the assessment process CELCAA and its members are currently conducting, to better define the needs of the sector with regard to sustainable agri-food trade policies, based on a strategic roadmap of engagement with science and research as well as with EU and multilateral policymakers and within the sector itself. Key challenges so far identified have been, amongst others, limited guidance through science on what sustainable agri-food trade entails, a continuous fragmentation of environmental standards, a growing disconnect between the multilateral and EU policy making spaces, and a lack of attention to competitiveness concerns and long-term changing trade patterns.

Dr. Alberto Menghi from the Research Centre on Animal Production ([CRPA](#)) in Reggio Emilia, Italy, one of the consortium partners of the [MATS](#) project ("Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable") funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program, presented the first findings of the project. It focuses on addressing the economic, social and environmental sustainability of agri-food trade, including the competitiveness of supply chains. Menghi flagged during his presentation that sustainability is an interconnected concept: "*If you push the button in the field of environmental sustainability, it will have a direct impact on the other two dimensions of sustainability, namely social and economic.*" He further identified that stronger prioritisation of sustainability objectives would be essential, to allow agri-food trade to have more sustainable operations. Lastly, Elodie Clerk from DG AGRI's WTO Unit emphasised the Commission's strategy rolling out the EU's environmental sustainability vision into the multilateral arena.

The meeting was followed by a visit to the Van Drie Group research centre focused on calf husbandry and its animal feed production facility. The debates and conclusions from this field visit will feed into CELCAA's ongoing work on sustainable agri-food trade

Ends

CELCAA – The European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade

Rue Gachard 80 – 1050 Ixelles

Tel: +32 486 80 05 98 Email: nellyi.hajdu@celcaa.eu

Transparency Register : 546282614966-51