

Mandate of the sub-group established under the EU Platform on Animal Welfare to support EU activities on "animal welfare labelling"

As provided in Article 8 (1) of Commission Decision of 24 January 2017 establishing the Commission Expert Group 'Platform on Animal Welfare'¹ and in its Rules of Procedure², the Chair of the Platform may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by the Commission.

The Commission and the members of the EU Platform on Animal welfare (the 'Platform') agreed to establish a sub-group on “animal welfare labelling”.

1. SCOPE

The sub-group will provide technical expertise and opinions to the Commission on the ways the Union’s instruments and policies can better inform consumers on the welfare of animals whilst offering farmers incentives for improving it.

In the context of this mandate, the subgroup will work on the consumption of foods derived from the main farmed species, i.e. eggs, milk, meat from cattle, pigs, sheep, poultry and farmed fish. At this stage, the subgroup will not consider processed food.

The subgroup may consider experiences and opinions derived from the consumption of other products where similar issues may exist (feathers, leather, and fur). The subgroup may also consider experiences and opinions derived from the information on other societal concerns on the same food (carbon footprint, fair trade, etc.) and considering the relevant Farm to Fork strategy objectives.

The subgroup will also consider experiences and opinions, when relevant, from third countries, especially from the main EU trade partners for the food concerned. In that regard, the subgroup will also reflect on the international implications of its opinions, notably with regard to the obligations of the EU towards the World Trade Organisations.

2. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the labelling sub-group is to collect information on experiences and opinions regarding information to consumers on animal welfare.

For that purpose, the subgroup will perform the following tasks:

1. Identify different certification schemes that claim animal welfare attributes (as main focus or not);
2. Collect and establish the criteria to compare these schemes based on their key characteristics (compulsory or voluntary; state or privately run; generic or sector specific; with animal welfare claims or not, etc.);
3. Establish the criteria to compare these schemes in terms of technical standards (only production methods, use of animal based or resources based indicators, model to integrate criteria, frequency of the audits, etc.);

¹ Commission Decision of 24 January 2017 establishing the Commission Expert Group ‘Platform on Animal Welfare’ C/2017/0280 OJ C 31, 31.1.2017, p. 61

² <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3504>

4. Establish criteria to compare these schemes in terms of providing information to the consumers (system of levels, logo, QR code, etc.);
5. Collect information on how these schemes measure their contribution to improve the welfare of animals both qualitatively and quantitatively.
6. Analyse and compare the different schemes identified through the above-mentioned criteria.
7. Propose key actions that the Union could envisage with due regard to its competences and its available policy instruments.
8. Define baselines, indicators and monitoring tools for the Union to monitor the progress of the actions proposed.

3. STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

The sub-group shall be composed of a maximum of 10 members of the Platform with a balanced representation of each member type.

The composition of the sub-group would therefore have a maximum of:

- Member States, EEA members and international organisations: 4 seats
- Business and professional organisations: 3 seats
- Organisations from civil society: 2 seats
- Independent experts: 1 seat

The Commission may decide to alter the number of seat allocated to each type of member if insufficient applicants are received from one member type and an excess of applications is received from other types.

4. CRITERIA TO BECOME A MEMBER:

In order to be selected, Members of the Platform of Animal Welfare must complete the application in the Annex and provide evidence of their experience on animal welfare labelling and more specifically regarding:

- drafting legislation or private standards regarding food labelling schemes;
- technical implementation and audits of technical standards related to food labelling schemes;
- communication related to food labelling schemes;
- consumer behaviour.

For Member States seeking a position in the sub-group, consideration will also be given to the significance of the application of the existing animal welfare schemes in their territory.

Consideration will also be given to proven targeted activities on awareness campaign carried out in their territory.

Finally experience of working in groups with different actors/groups to reach consensus will be considered.

Candidates have to be aware that participation to the sub-group requires being fluent in English since meetings and documents will be held in English only.

5. OVERALL TIMELINE AND WORKING PROCEDURES

Applications to become a member of the sub-group should be sent to the Commission no later than 15 of July 2020 to the following e-mail address:

SANTE-CONSULT-G2@ec.europa.eu

Applications should follow the template in Annex I.

The sub-group will operate in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups³ and the Commission Decision establishing this Platform.

The sub-group will be chaired by the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) representatives. Meetings of the sub-group will be held, in principle, at the Commission's premises in Brussels with one meeting to be held in 2020 and two in 2021.

The sub-group will support the Platform's work in this area for the duration of its mandate and will report to the Platform.

The working language for the sub-group will be English.

DG SANTE will provide secretarial services. Minutes will be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the chair.

DG SANTE will publish all relevant documents of the sub-group, including the agenda, the minutes and the participants' submission, either on the Register of expert group or via link from the Register to a dedicated website, where this information can be found.

³ C(2016) 3301, article 14(1)