

Groupe de Bruges



Amsterdam Meeting

Minutes for the members of the group

1. New working themes for the Bruges Group

The meeting of the members of the Bruges Group was held in Amsterdam on November 1st and 2nd. There were 16 members present as well as the founder of the group, Mr. Edgar Pisani and 3 guests from France, Spain and the Czech Republic.

Members present: Dacian Ciolos ; Piotr Dabrowski ; Arvydas Kuodis ; Norbert Feltgen ; Franz Greif ; Bertrand Hervieu ; Zdenek Linhart ; Eduardo Moyano ; Edgard Pisani ; Hans Popp ; Franco Sotte ; Arie Van Den Brand ; Marta Stauder ; Hilikka Vihinen ; Wulf Treiber ; Bart Soldaat et Pierre-Yves Guihéneuf (secretaries).

The meeting was focussed on the developments both in Europe and in the world based on the proposals made by Mr. Edgar Pisani in his latest book, *An Old Man and the Earth*.

The debate was largely on the effects of the enlargement of the EU on the public debate on agriculture. The evolution of the CAP is still encountered in the historical perspective of the CEE, followed by the EU of 12 and 15 members without reference to the historical context of the new members. Nowadays it seems necessary to take more into account the diversity of historical paths members have experienced. The 'old' paradigm of the unified market, the compensation mechanisms and other aspects of the past of the CAP no longer suffice to understand the diversity of agriculture in Europe and to anticipate their responses to the reforms or their needs.

It is in this framework that it is necessary for the Group de Bruges to get engaged in a re-evaluation of the CAP, especially in the light of the latest reforms (Luxembourg, 2003). The impact of the de-coupling has to be more thoroughly investigated, but the feeling of the Group is pessimistic. Edgar Pisani compares the decoupling with a "permanent compensation of abandonment" and it's true that the decoupling risks having negative effects on innovation, on the market integration of farmers, on their connections with society and on the legitimacy of the support that farmers get. The territorial cohesion on the one hand and the cohesion between agriculture and countryside on the other hand are also part of this concern.

The group has also discussed the international dimensions of the CAP. Three dimensions were identified:

1. The WTO negotiations
2. The follow up of the process of enlargement, in particular Turkey, possibly the Balkan countries and certainly certain Eastern countries (Ukraine)
3. The connections with the peripheral areas, in particular the Mediterranean countries

To give structure to the debate and the work to be done in the future the group has decided to form working groups on the following themes:

1. A re-evaluation of the CAP and in particular the effects of the decoupling on agriculture, territorial cohesion and the rural-agricultural connections. Franco Sotte will be co-ordinator of this group (f.sotte@univpm.it). Other members of this group are: Hillka Vihinen, Wulf Treiber, Arvydad Kuodys, Piotr Dabrowski and Norbert Feltgen
2. The WTO-rules and the debates on liberalisation versus regulation of markets and the effects on European agriculture. Co-ordinator of this group will be Marta Stauder (stauderM@akii.hu). Other members of the group are: Hans Popp and Franz Treiber
3. The agricultural dimensions of the membership to the EU of Turkey and the Balkan countries
Dacian Ciolos will co-ordinate this group (ciolos@ensam.inra.fr) assisted by Zdenek Linhart. This group will begin its activities at the end of 2005, because of the fact the Dacian has to finish his PhD first.

Eduardo Moyano indicated that he will form a separate group, with representatives of the Mediterranean countries, outside the Group de Bruges but exchanges will be organised. This group will work on the geo-strategic and food production relationships between the EU and the Mediterranean countries and the consequences for international co-operation.

→ The members not present at the Amsterdam meeting are invited to participate at one of these groups. If so, please get into contact with the respective co-ordinator of each group.

The objective of the first two groups is to prepare a document for the next meeting of the Bruges Group.

2. Public Debate in Amsterdam

The public debate was organised in Amsterdam on the evening of November 1st. Some 60 people from a wide range of institutions and organisations attended the meeting: from universities, NGO's, farmers, civil servants.

Mr. Pisani gave an introduction on his new book, followed by a reaction of the Dutch Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Cees Veerman. The public debate was led by Arie van den Brand and Bertrand Hervieu with the participation of Mr. Ate Oostra, Head of the Department of International Affairs of the Dutch ministry of Agriculture, who replaced Mr. Veerman after the break. A comprehensive report of the meeting is still in the making.

3. Organisation of the group

Bertrand Hervieu has resigned as chair of the Group; Arie van den Brand will be the new president. Franco Sotte has been appointed vice president. Bart Soldaat will take over the secretariat starting from today, at least until the next meeting of the group. Pierre-Yves Guihéneuf will stay on as assistant in particular for research on funding, the diffusion of texts and the maintenance of the website.

All members are asked to address Bart Soldaat for all matters concerning the Bruges Group. Bart can read Dutch, English, German, French and Italian.
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The secretariat will investigate the possibilities to create a third contact point in one of the new member states.

4. Enlargement of the group

Everybody is invited to give suggestions for new members directly to Arie and Franco, who are mandated to make proposals for the final choice of new members. For a more balanced composition of the group new members are especially welcomed from the following groups:

- Young
- Women
- Decision makers
- Members of other European networks
- Journalists and other communication professionals
- People from countries that at present are not represented in the group: Balkan countries, Greece, Ireland, etc.

5. Next meeting

The period Friday 17 until Sunday 19 of June 2005 was proposed for the next meeting. Wulf Treiber has offered to hold the meeting at his training centre in Hershing (Bavaria, Germany).

The dates and place will be confirmed as soon as possible. Funding possibilities will have to be researched. Your ideas for the programme and funding possibilities are welcomed of course. For this please contact Bart Soldaat.