

**Minutes of 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Informal Working Group on Halloumi/Hellim**  
**30 March 2023**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Informal Working Group (WG) on Halloumi/Hellim (HH) was held on 30 March 2023 in the Home 4 Cooperation in Nicosia. The meeting was chaired by the Commission services, with the presence of 9 out of 10 WG members (see Annex 1). All members present signed a specific form giving consent to having their names published on the DG REFORM website.

The WG adopted the draft agenda shared in advance of the meeting.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss recent developments and to identify common ground for addressing challenges related to small ruminants' milk yields on the island. The members were invited to share their views on possible solutions for increasing the milk yields, of a possible bi-communal character.

Members noted the first inspection taken place in the Turkish Cypriot community and the first Halloumi/Hellim PDO certificate issued to a Turkish Cypriot producer. It was noted that inspections are carried out in both communities by the same delegated body, according to the same methodology and according to the exact same standards. Turkish Cypriots products will not be allowed to cross the Green Line into the EU market before all relevant EU standards on animal health and public health are met.

Members shared their views on circumstances that negatively impact the available quantities of sheep and goat milk. Issues covered included the high price of animal feed, disinterest for entering into the business of farming sheep and goat, the lack of economic motivators, especially for young educated people, as well as a sub-optimal dairy market organisation.

Potential solutions discussed were generally related to pricing; it was noted that a balanced approach should be sought between raising the price of milk that should be quality related, and raising the price of the final product, which could lead to losses of part of the existing cheese market that is very competitive and price sensitive. In addition, it was proposed to bring in external expertise in advanced farming practices and using new climate-resistant crops. Improvements linked to feeding and animal sheltering practices were also mentioned. Members highlighted that maintaining the level playing field for producers and farmers from both communities is essential.

As a follow up, members were invited to suggest possible additional strategies that could be useful to both communities, and to provide this input using the enclosed form. They were invited to suggest discussion points for the forthcoming meetings, to support the collaborative spirit of the Working Group.

It was announced that the next meeting would be held in the second part of June 2023. The minutes of the meeting will be posted on the DG REFORM website.

Annex 1: List of members participating in the first meeting of the Informal Working Group on Halloumi/Hellim:

- Andrea, Christo
- Andreou, Andreas
- Avunduk, Bekir Meriç
- Erel, Metehan
- Ergüven, Mustafa
- Naimoğulları, Mustafa
- Öztürk, Kemal
- Petrou, Georgios
- Pittas, Yiannos

From the Commission:

Björnsson Kjartan, DG REFORM – Chair of meeting  
Aubin Vincent, DG SANTE – Co-chair (*participating online*)  
Pomoell-Segurola Jutta, DG REFORM (*participating online*)  
Stiglmayer Alexandra, DG REFORM  
Birinci Deniz, DG REFORM  
Buza-Vidas Marina, DG REFORM