



**Growing Media
Europe**

December
Newsletter

21 December 2021

Growing Media Europe

Welcome to the December Newsletter! This publication is intended to increase the level of direct communication with our members, keeping all of you up to date on the most important topics. The topics covered here are highlights intended for a bite sized read covering the last few months. You are welcome to reach out if you would like more in-depth information on any topics covered. Please enjoy!



Note from new GME Public Affairs Officer

Hi everyone, many of you have already met me, but for those who haven't, my name is Geoffrey Bennett, and I am the new Public Affairs Officer at Growing Media Europe. It's very exciting to be working in this field. My background is in Politics and International Relations, and previously I have worked for Tesla in Canada, and for a tech company here in Brussels. I'm extremely passionate about sustainability, on both a policy and personal level. I am delighted to have started at GME back in November and the last couple of weeks have already

been one steep learning curve, boosting my motivation to fully get to know GME and its members in 2022!

Growing Media Europe continues to grow!

2021 has been a great year for GME. Over the course of the year, we have grown from 21 company members to 26, welcoming Premier Tech, De Ceuster Group, Nurma Turvas, Westland, and very recently Dutch Plantin.



We are very excited having you all on board and starting 2022 stronger than ever!

GME Internal Updates

General Assembly November 2021

GME held its annual General Assembly online on 30 November 2021. During this meeting, we introduced new GME Member Westland, as well as our new Public Affairs Officer Geoffrey Bennett. We also:

- Covered the progress made on the LCA tool (more info below)
- Gave a report on recent political developments and GME's public affairs activities
- Discussed ways to make the members area on the website more engaging for members
- Outlined the structure for internal meetings in 2022



Hybrid Board meeting 7 December 2021 (hybrid)

The meeting was the last meeting amongst the current Board Members as Sander van Golberdinge will be leaving GRODAN end of the year to start a new position in public affairs and thus also has to leave the Board. All Board Members expressed their sincere gratitude for the good work and dedication of Sander over the last years. GME wishes Sander all the best for the future!

During this meeting we discussed:

- Financial planning and strategy for 2022
- Provided an update on the political situation, specifically regarding LULUCF and Taxonomy and implementation of the new Fertilizing Product Regulation
- The political lunch planned by Neova where we had the chance to have a conversation about the Peat situation in Europe (more info below)
- Finally, we planned dates for the spring General Assembly 2022

Changes to GME Working Groups and Task Forces

There have been some changes to our internal structure:

- **WG Public Affairs** elected a new chair
 - Dirk Röse, Klasmann-Deilmann (left)
- **WG Expertise** elected a new chair
Henri Beekers, Jiffy (right)



LCA Project Update

The LCA project development kicked off in the second half of 2021. Blonk is working closely with GME and its members to develop the tool, with the hopes that the first demo version will be ready by Q1 2022 and the final version being available by July 2022.

The Public Affairs WG, supported by Nele Ameloot and Rud Pedersen, has developed messages based on the key results of the first phase of the LCA project. The messages will be included in a leaflet and a presentation that will soon be available and can then be used for public affairs purposes.

Public Affairs Updates

“Pro Peat Platform”

In September we kicked off the informal “Pro Peat Platform” together with COPA-COGECA and several other value chain partners representing the users of growing media. The goal of this loose industry stakeholder network is to ensure the long-term availability of peat for horticulture and agriculture. The associations will join forces in reaching out to key contacts with the focus in Q1 2022 being on EU Taxonomy and LULUCF regulation.

As a follow-up to the platform meeting, GME chairman Juha Mäkinen and Secretary General Cecilia Luetgebrune had a successful meeting with Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General of COPA-COGECA on 7 December in Brussels. COPA-COGECA is aware of the enormous risk imposed by potential legislative changes on the use of peat for the horti-agri sector and will collaborate closely with GME on the respective policy topics.

EU Taxonomy & LULUCF

The EU Taxonomy regulation is the cornerstone of the EU’s sustainable finance framework. It aims to provide criteria to establish a list of environmentally sustainable economic activities. The currently developed delegated act will still undergo several reviews in Q1 2022. GME Secretariat and several GME members have provided input to the public consultation. GME will engage with the relevant decision makers once the draft delegated act is published in 2022.

The Land Use Land Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation is part of the wider Fit-for-55 package. Peatlands are part of the Land use sector and their use might face new legislative constraints depending on Member States’ approach to reaching their respective national emissions reduction targets. The LULUCF Regulation aims to include the LULUCF sector into the overall climate objectives, encouraging Member States to preserve as well as increase natural carbon sinks in their LULUCF sectors. The overall objective is to reach net zero emissions from LULUCF and agriculture sectors by 2035. To reach net zero, this means to achieve a balance between CO₂ emissions and CO₂ removals from the atmosphere. GME will continue to monitor and engage actively on this topic.

Fertilising Products Regulation

GME’s most “longstanding” policy topic has continued to keep the Secretariat - strongly supported by Gerald Schmilewski and Nele Ameloot – busy in the last couple of months. Several bilateral meeting with DG GROW on the FPR

restrictions on wood fibre/chips fiberisation took place, and the Gütegemeinschaft Substrate was able to demonstrate in a trial that the claimed risk of creating certain harmful substances during (industry standard) fiberisation processes is unsubstantial. However, no changes will be made to the adopted text for the time being. Cecilia and Nele took part in the Expert WG meeting of DG GROW on 22 and 23 November, where it became very clear that the FPR will not be fully “workable” by the time it will become applicable in July 2022. The infrastructure of respectively registered Notifying Bodies is not existent, the required standards and methods currently developed by the CEN will not be finalised on time and open questions about the applicable labelling rules for the new “Fertilising Products” make their market access in 2022 seem rather unlikely (Via our Task Force Labelling, GME will support DG GROW in defining practically feasible labelling requirements for growing media and soil improver in 2022).

The Commission announced that a technical guidance document will be developed to help producers find their way through the “FPR jungle”. GME will be involved in the multi-stakeholder process and keep members up to date.

Neova Political Lunch meeting 8 December

On 8 December, the Finnish company Neova (to which our member company Kekkilä-BVB belongs) hosted a political lunch event on the political situation of peat in Europe, with a focus on EU Taxonomy and LULUCF regulation. GME supported the promotion of the event to political decision makers and GME’s Secretary General Cecilia Luetgebrune had the chance to give a keynote speech, highlighting the direct link between the need for horticultural peat and several Green Deal goals of the European Union. Thijs Jacobs from Glastuinbouw Nederland presented the view of the greenhouse growers, confirming that peat based growing media are vital for the horticultural sector of Europe now and in the future. The event was attended DG CLIMA and representatives of the European Parliament.



FPR Policy Workshop at “Growing Media 2021”

Jointly with the European Compost Network (ECN), GME co-hosted a policy workshop on the Fertilising Product Regulation (FPR) at the ISHS conference GrowingMedia 2021. Nele Ameloot presented the state of play of the Regulation’s implementation and the hurdles that growing media producers still see with regards to meeting the FPR’s requirements. In the panel discussion moderated by Cecilia Luetgebrune, Jérémy Pinte from DG GROW engaged in direct discussions with representatives of the compost and growing media sector.

The 3 day symposium was organized in a hybrid format and reached 180 participants from 28 countries. The event allowed for sharing expertise on Growing media, sustainable resources, disease and pest control, water and nutrient efficiency and biochar and compost in horticulture. The program included 5 Keynote speakers, 50 oral presentations and 32 poster presentations and many technical tours.

