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Press Release

COPA-COGECA URGES EU COMMISSION TO ENSURE ROBUST CAP

Copa-Cogeca urged the EU Commission today to ensure there is a strong CAP in the future, to help farmers cope with increasingly costly EU regulations, price volatility and to strengthen their economic role in providing food and services to 500 million consumers.

Speaking at the EU Commission Conference on the future CAP, Copa President Pdraig Walshe pointed out the inconsistencies in EU policies. “Whilst greening the CAP and imposing an increasing number of environmental and food safety regulations on EU farmers’ operations, the European Commission is opening trade talks with Mercosur countries which do not have to follow these high standards. Yet this would cause further deforestation in these countries as well as increase unemployment in the rural areas of the EU.”

He continued “Farmers are already in a critical situation with a big 12% income drop seen last year. The future does not look very bright either. Price volatility is on the increase. The EU has offered to cut farm tariffs by an average 60% in the Doha round of world trade liberalising talks. Now, the Commission is preparing to offer yet further preferential access to our biggest competitor Brazil, within the context of the trade liberalising talks with Mercosur. Growth promoters and pesticides, which are banned in the EU, are allowed there”.

“To make matters worse, we hear some people proposing that EU farmers be squeezed still further in the future, by imposing more costly regulations and obligations on them and by cutting CAP support further. This is absurd. If support was cut, EU farming would become in fact more intensive”, President Walshe concluded.

Cogeca President Paolo Bruni warned that “We simply cannot endanger the 28 million jobs which agriculture and the agri-food sector currently provides in rural areas. If production was not economically viable, many regions of the EU would face land abandonment. This could destroy huge investments that farmers and their cooperatives have put into the sector.”

“We consequently urge the EU Commission to ensure that there is a robust CAP in the future, which improves farmers competitive position and strengthens their economic role in providing services and food for 500 million consumers. The EU agriculture budget and direct payments to farmers must at least be maintained, in order to safeguard a competitive EU agriculture sector and a flourishing countryside”, Mr Bruni said.

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