

18/06/12

# Press Release

## **COPA-COGECA OUTLINES DETAILED VIEWS ON FUTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND WELCOMES DANISH PRESIDENCY PROGRESS REPORT**

At EU Farm Ministers meeting today, Copa-Cogeca welcomed many aspects of EU Commission proposals on Rural Development Policy under the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). But Copa-Cogeca called for a new specific measure to allow green growth in order to ensure both environmental and productivity gains. Cogeca President Paolo Bruni also welcomed today Ministers calls to ensure there is sufficient flexibility for member states when applying the measures.

In a high-level meeting with Danish Farm Minister Mette Gjerskov, Mr Bruni stressed “Overall, we favour the Commissions’ approach on future EU rural development policy. We agree that environmental-related measures are an extremely important part of rural development and that a minimum percentage of the EAFRD budget should be spent on such measures. This was also advocated by many Ministers today. But the new CAP needs to put more emphasis on measures which achieve both benefits for the environment and also help farmers to improve their productivity and efficiency. What we call green growth. We need growth not only to help Europe out of its current problems, but also to contribute to global food security. The current agri-environmental measures must be maintained. But they are not geared to achieving green growth. In fact, like the Commission’s greening proposals under the first pillar, they may have a negative impact on productivity and production capacity. And they are limited to annual hectare payments. In many cases green growth will require investment. This is why we believe there should be a new specific measure in the second pillar, to encourage green growth. This measure should be specifically linked to meeting the fifth Union priority - achieving resource efficiency and a climate resilient economy - and it should be included in the minimum-spend requirement. Payments to areas with natural handicaps are also of crucial importance for achieving benefits for the environment whilst maintaining our production capacity. This must be recognised and they must also be included in a minimum-spend requirement.

He continued “We are also very worried about the review of Less Favoured Areas (LFA) whereby much of the previous LFAs would lose their status and others would gain. We hope Ministers and MEPs will agree on a delimitation of LFAs which is comprehensible and takes in account the real difficulties in land management. We nevertheless support the new and further developed measures, such as knowledge and innovation transfer and cooperation measures. We welcome the new European Innovation Partnership which will bring together farmers, advisors and researchers”.

Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen went on to welcome the Danish Presidency progress report on the proposals, which outlines the state of play and Ministers views, especially their priority for CAP simplification and to cut red tape under the proposals. This is very much in line with our views. “We also welcome Ministers support for targeting payments to active farmers and agree with them that this must be achieved in a simpler way than that proposed by the Commission with more flexibility for Member States. Like us, many Ministers welcomed the new EU Commission concept paper on greening, saying it’s a step in the right direction, and that a 7% rate for the Ecological focus area (EFA) is too high and must be reduced. Copa-Cogeca also

welcomes the Council conclusions agreed today on the protection and welfare of animals and the need to strengthen the degree of confidence between producers' efforts and consumers' demands on welfare, with more active participation of retailers, and a fair price to producers. Furthermore, Copa-Cogeca welcomes Ministers conclusions on animal transport, calling for current rules to be made clearer and better enforced across EU Member States. We believe that this, together with sufficient controls at Member State level, should ensure the internal market functions well", Mr Pesonen said.

"Finally, I would like to thank the Danish Presidency for their hard work over the past 6 months and look forward to working with the Cypriot Presidency in the months to come", he stressed.

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