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Press Release

Europe must equip its agriculture with a food shield to face the consequences of two major crises: the war in Ukraine and climate change

Copa and Cogeca held a coordination meeting with their members on the humanitarian situation arising from the war in Ukraine and on the first responses provided by the extraordinary meeting of the AGRIFISH Council organised by the French Presidency.

The impulse of solidarity of the farming community with the Ukrainian people is real and visible in all member countries. Farmers are starting to welcome refugees to their farms, the first convoys organised by farmers are on their way, along with food, supplies and financial donations. Copa-Cogeca will publish on its website more information for farmers, cooperatives and any citizen who wants to support the actions undertaken by the EU agricultural community.

In the coming days, Ukrainian agricultural organisation UNAF (Ukrainian National Agrarian Forum) will join the European farming community by becoming a Copa and Cogeca partner. On this matter, Ramon Armengol, Cogeca President said "Welcoming our Ukrainian colleagues to Copa and Cogeca is the natural extension of this expression of solidarity that is taking place on the ground by farmers and their cooperatives. The European farming community is mobilising at all levels to provide concrete support to the Ukrainian people and refugees arriving in all member states. "

On the political and economic front, initial analyses clearly show the importance of the reconstruction challenges that European agriculture will face in the short and medium term. This war which affects Europe will have worldwide repercussions for several years to come. Most productions will be directly or indirectly impacted. It is therefore essential to have a European response that equals the humanitarian and economic disaster. In this regard, Copa and Cogeca are expecting comprehensive, robust, out-of-the-box measures by the European Commission on March 8th. Exceptional situations call for exceptional measures. The speed of application of these measures is of crucial importance. Some sectors already heavily affected by the price increases resulting from the Covid and energy crises must be supported without delay, while other farmers need clear policy guidance as they start sowing.

Christiane Lambert, Copa President said "Since the Russian government is using food security as a weapon, we must counter it with a food shield. As with energy, in agriculture we strongly believe that it is possible to strengthen our strategic autonomy while continuing to make progress on sustainability. Pitting these two dimensions against each other, as we have heard in Brussels in recent days, is unproductive. We need to rearm our agriculture today to face these two major crises at the same time: the war in Ukraine and climate change."

As Copa and Cogeca have been saying for years, and as the facts today clearly prove, food security is highly strategic and still very relevant. A paradigm shift is needed in the way Brussels thinks about agriculture, starting with the objectives set out in the Farm to Fork. Farmers and cooperatives are now waiting for concrete guidelines and actions as a solution to food, energy, climate, and environmental challenges. As the current President of the AGRIFISH Council,

French Minister Denormandie, rightly declared at the end of the exceptional meeting of the Council on Wednesday, it is urgent to unleash the potential of European agriculture to mitigate the effects of this war. Copa and Cogeca are asking to be able to cultivate all available land in 2022 to compensate for the blockage of Russian and Ukrainian production. Everything must be done to prevent disruptions in supply chains, which will inevitably lead to shortages in certain parts of the world. This is an essential question of food sovereignty and democratic stability.

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