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Press Release

Future of food and farming: Copa and Cogeca outline positive and negative aspects of new EU plan at press event

In response to a new EU Commission Communication on the future of food and farming released this week, Copa and Cogeca held a press event to present its views, saying it is a good basis to work on. But guarantees are needed to ensure that simplification will deliver results for farmers, that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) truly remains a common policy without any renationalisation and that it is backed by a strong budget. The budget ceiling needs to be increased above 1% of the Gross National Income to adequately finance the new challenges of the Union.

The move comes after EU Commissioner Phil Hogan clarified details of the plan in Brussels this week, saying that it is more of “an evolution than a revolution” of CAP policy, with a high level of environmental ambition. The Commission believes that the “one size fits all approach” doesn’t work and has proposed **a new delivery model**. This would leave it up to Member States to define how they will meet environmental and climate goals and define practices and controls most appropriate to their region.

Speaking at the press event, President Joachim Rukwied of the European Farmers Organisation Copa said “It is vital to have a strong, competitive, market-oriented Common Agricultural Policy in the future, with **common and simple rules** across the EU. It is good news that the Commission has proposed keeping both pillars of the CAP in its plan with **direct payments** in the first pillar, without co-funding, to help stabilize farmer’s incomes. We oppose any capping or degressivity of payments as suggested by the Commission”.

“We are pleased that the Commission has put greater focus on **smart farming and on risk management** measures in its Communication. This is something that we called for and it will be important to see how this pans out. Copa and Cogeca believe that the risk management measures must remain voluntary for producers to apply and remain in the second pillar of the CAP. It is welcome news too that market safety nets will be kept and more focus on this in the plans is needed. We welcome the Commission’s objective to streamline measures and to simplify rules. But he voiced concerns about the new delivery model and the practicalities of performance based measures. More clarification on how this will work is needed”, he stressed.

Cogeca President Thomas Magnusson underlined the importance of **environmental measures** in the CAP to improve sustainability and biodiversity. It is good that there will be a strong rural development pillar to ensure the vitality of rural areas. Broad band access is vital so that farmers and cooperatives can make use of new technologies like smart farming and encourage generation renewal. We welcome the fact that the Commission’s Communication recognises that it is crucial to boost investment, to increase our sectors contribution to the **bioeconomy and circular economy** and to have more uptake of new technologies and digital based opportunities. We welcome too that research and innovation and advisory services driven by farmers' needs are considered important tools to help our sectors to address challenges. Finally, we need to continue measures under the CAP to encourage farmers to join cooperatives as this can improve farmers positioning in the food chain. More focus needs to be put in the Communication on this. For details of our position, see www.copa-cogeca.eu

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