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Press Release

A deal on Mercosur would be a dead end for EU farmers and citizens!

EU trade chief Cecilia Malmström confirmed on Wednesday that a deal on Mercosur could be reached in the coming months. This is crossing a red line not only for European farmers and agri-cooperatives but also for all European citizens who are voting for a greener, more transparent and protective Europe. How can the European Commission justify to EU farmers and citizens that it plans to import further agricultural goods from Brazil a few months after Mr Bolsonaro's government authorised over 150 new pesticides, while the same Commission proposes the exact opposite strategy for its producers?

High-ranking Commission representatives also expressed the view that the impact of a trade deal with Mercosur on sensitive sectors would be “manageable”. Copa and Cogeca clearly disagree with this approach, especially in view of the deal's cumulative impact considering other existing and planned trade agreements.

In Brazil, production models are subject to environmental, sanitary and phytosanitary standards that are well below those in force in Europe. It would thus benefit from a clear and unfair competitive advantage. The European farming sector, which is currently already under significant pressure, will face an even tougher struggle for survival as it will find itself up against massive imports of beef, sugar, poultry, ethanol, rice, orange juice and many other products from these countries.

Reacting to the announcement, Pekka Pesonen, Copa and Cogeca Secretary General, said, *“The EU has already granted substantial market access on sensitive agricultural products, without getting much in return. Trade concessions must be minimised for our more sensitive sectors, namely beef, sugar, poultry, ethanol, rice and orange juice. Any trade agreement must be balanced within the agriculture chapter, respecting our production models and ensuring consistency with other EU policies. European farmers can cope with further restrictions and the implementation of ambitious measures to adapt to climate change and to the environmental challenges. But they can only do so if the EU does not undermine their efforts by tolerating the import of goods from trade partners that encourage deforestation and agronomic practices that are not accepted inside our borders.”*

In view of the further uncertainties surrounding the Brexit talks and international trade, as well as discussions on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the EU budget, we urge the EU not to put further pressure on the agricultural sector. Copa and Cogeca also call on all the newly elected MEPs who defend a fair and protective EU to raise their voice starting from next week!

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Translations (in French, Italian, Spanish, German and Polish) will be available soon.
www.copacogeca.eu

For further information, please contact:

Daniel Azevedo

Director Commodities, Trade and Technology

daniel.Azevedo@copa-cogeca.eu

Jean-Baptiste Boucher

Communications Director

Mobile: + 32 474 840 836

jean-baptiste.boucher@copa-cogeca.eu

CDP(19)4283:1
