

08/04/2020

## Press Release

### **Facing a dramatic collapse, the European ornamental sector calls for the Community aid scheme**

With preliminary figures suggesting that demand has decreased by up to 80%, the sector (cut flowers, ornamental plants, trees, bulbs and nurseries) has, since mid-March, endured a historic collapse in demand and consumption in most EU Member States and abroad. The coronavirus crisis is currently responsible for the widespread closure of shops, the disappearance of sales channels and some major losses for the ornamental sector. Against this backdrop, Copa and Cogeca have sent a letter to the European Commission asking for the Community aid scheme to address the specific needs of the sector.

Pekka Pesonen, Copa and Cogeca Secretary General, pointed out that in this sector *“This crisis has unfortunately struck at the worst time of the year as spring is the period when the majority of turnover is generated within the sector. This is now triggering the inevitable destruction of production and stocks on a massive scale across the EU. The domino effect that has ensued over the past few weeks on the overall supply chain is bringing the whole sector to the brink of total collapse across the EU and beyond. This has major ramifications in terms of the bankruptcy of businesses and related employment across the supply chain.”*

The flower and ornamental plant sector is traditionally a free market sector that has always functioned under the most competitive terms and that employs around 760,000 people in the EU. The current crisis not only affects the production and sales of flowers as ornamentals but also the nurseries, which produce many of the plants used for cultivating trees, fruit and vegetables and other crops. This production is therefore fundamental to the supply chain, rural jobs and our food security. In this regard, horizontal measures consisting of temporary unemployment are not useful in this sector, as people are constantly needed in the nurseries to take care of the plants which will otherwise die.

This is why Copa and Cogeca call for the activation of extraordinary crisis management measures, such as those already provided for in Regulation 1308/2013, from which the sector has never previously benefited.

According to Copa and Cogeca, short-term and urgent extraordinary measures for production should include:

- A measure to compensate for losses in order to ensure the liquidity and continuation of the agricultural activity;
- A measure that can compensate for at least 80% of the disposal and production costs of the product not being sold;
- Maintaining the functioning of the single market.

In the medium to long term, European farmers and cooperative organisations call for additional measures that should include:

- A promotion fund specifically addressing the needs of the flowers and ornamental plant sector;
- An improved and more regular exchange of information with DG AGRI as well as the publication of data on flowers and the ornamental sector (e.g. production, consumption, trade, as is the case for other agricultural sectors).

Copa and Cogeca Secretary General concluded his letter to the Commission by underlining that *“the viability and survival of the entire flowers and ornamental sector in the EU, including plants for agricultural production, investment and all related jobs and businesses, are now at stake.”*

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To learn more about the technical measures put forward by the Copa and Cogeca Flowers and Ornamentals Working Party, you can access the full content of the letter [HERE](#).

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