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Press Release

Food security and support to local farming should be key priorities for EU Agri ministers while Coronavirus risks are still high

The political start of the second semester 2020 was eagerly awaited by the entire European farming community. Many essential issues were put on the agenda of the German Presidency Informal Council on Agriculture held in Koblenz, in a context made uncertain by the evolution of the Covid pandemic. Copa and Cogeca Presidents Joachim Rukwied and Ramon Armengol took the floor to ask the ministers present to take into account the lessons learned from the first wave of the crisis, particularly in the context of the upcoming discussions on the CAP and the Green Deal.

During his intervention Copa President Joachim Rukwied stated *“The outbreak of the coronavirus is still causing a dramatic impact on rural areas across the EU, with both immediate and medium- to long-term consequences in many sectors, as recognised by the Commission. The Union’s medium- to long-term response to the pandemic must be based on a solid and robust economic recovery programme that takes into consideration an increased sustainability, a response to climate change and an improved biodiversity protection. It must also continue to strive to improve the Union’s single market and the functioning of the food supply chain.”*

Furthermore, the farmers’ union president pointed out that despite the partial reopening of certain economic activities across the EU, the market situation in most sectors has not recovered substantially and further market management measures are needed to help the struggling sectors and farmers. Addressing both the Recovery Fund and the planning for the future CAP, the President underlined the three key points which must be taken into account: EU food security, farming competitiveness and decent income for farmers.

As a pig producer from Spain, Cogeca President Ramon Armengol, focused on aspects of animal welfare, a question high on the German ministerial agenda. Addressing the potential upcoming proposals on EU animal welfare from the European Commission, Mr Armengol pointed out that while there is the potential from consumers to pay more for welfare-friendly products if they are well-informed about animal welfare, there is unfortunately no clear evidence that such a premium would be passed onto farmers making the investment and therefore called for further studies in this regard. The Cogeca President also remarked on the fact that there are many false accusations made about the livestock sector and that further communication campaigns such as [MeatTheFacts](#) are needed, bringing various stakeholders together to ensure a balanced communication and a better understanding of the EU’s livestock sector and production standards.

On the topic of animal transport, the President of European cooperatives highlighted that *“When properly implemented and enforced, the EU legislation on the transport of animals has a positive impact on the welfare of animals. We advocate for a full and harmonised implementation of this legislation at all Member States’ level; taking in to consideration that some cases of non-compliance at Member State level may be related to specific geographical, political, climatic condition.”*

During their meeting with the German Presidency and EU agriculture ministers, the two Presidents also addressed key issues such as fostering climate resilience, unfair trading practices and origin labeling.

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Translations in DE, ES ,FR, IT, PL will soon be available on the Copa-Cogeca website.

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