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Statement

CAP - The Commission proposes simplifications that safeguard agricultural transitions!

To “adapt to changing realities” in the words of President Ursula von der Leyen, it was essential to carry out a rapid analysis of the situation and propose specific adjustments to make the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) implementation more efficient. This is what the European Commission has done swiftly. Copa and Cogeca share the Commission's analysis and support these simplification measures that do not undermine farming transitions.

Following the presentation of its non-paper last February as an emergency response, the European Commission today presented a second set of simplification CAP adjustments to address medium-term concerns. The chaotic implementation of the new, highly complex CAP in January 2023 collided with climatic, geo-political and economic events that made it difficult, if not impossible, to meet certain technical or timetable obligations. Farming is an open-air activity that doesn't take kindly to overly rigid administrative timetables. The Commission has reacted to some of the concerns expressed across Europe considering that “(…) adjustments are necessary to ensure effective implementation of the plans and cut red-tape.” The Commission also acknowledged that those elements where part of the reasons for the widespread protest of famers across the Member States.

The objective is therefore clearly stated by the Commission and should be supported by all; to review the elements that are too rigid, complex, and overly administrative, without calling into question the direction of the agricultural transitions envisioned in the CAP. This also explains why the Commission planned no impact study on these adjustments. Therefore, one can only regret the polarisation campaign that started even before the publication of the proposed regulation creating a disconnection between the content of the actual text and its presentation in the European public debate. It is important to understand what the Commission has truly proposed:

* The changes to GAECs 5, 6 and 7 do not remove the obligations to comply with these standards but offer Member States and farmers a more flexible manner of attaining them considering the local extreme weather events and soil conditions. Regarding GAEC 7 we consider that this flexibility does not go far enough.
* The proposals regarding GAEC 8 make it now possible to achieve these objectives through voluntary measures in Pillar 1 (eco-schemes). However, the European Commission should allow the use of agro-environmental climate commitments for the same purpose.
* We believe that the proposal for exempting farmers under 10 hectares from CAP conditionality controls and penalties will greatly reduce the administrative burdens they face.
* In what regards the proposals impacting on the functioning of the food supply chain, we support measures to improve and strengthen farmers’ positioning in the chain especially those through producer organisations with the aim to ensure a fair remuneration. These must however be supplemented by an increased transparency in the functioning of the food chain and reduction of the associated administrative burden. We hope that both the Council and the European Parliament can rapidly go ahead with the analysis of the proposals in this area.

There are still many lessons that could have been learnt from the CAP implementation. For instance, it is fundamental that the Commission adjusts its process of analysis and approval of the National Strategic Plans to ensure that it becomes faster and more responsive to the need of Member States and farmers. In the end, farmers, foresters, and their cooperatives are the ones who will actually implement the requested transitions while ensuring EU food security, so it is necessary to hear them and build effective responses that work on the ground. We call upon the Council and the European Parliament to rapidly deliver on these proposals to allow an implementation by all Members States already in 2025, ensuring predictability and stability for the European farming community until 2027.

**-END-**

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

About us - Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, while guaranteeing food security for 500 million people throughout Europe. >>> More information [www.copa-cogeca.eu](http://www.copa-cogeca.eu)

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