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Statement

Strategic alignment on the future of agriculture – Copa and Cogeca support the conclusions of the Belgian Presidency of the Council

At yesterday's meeting of agriculture and fisheries Ministers, the Belgian Presidency of the Council presented its conclusions on the future of agriculture. Copa and Cogeca support this document, which recognises the strategic importance of agriculture and proposes precise political priorities, most of which aligned with our manifesto presented during the European elections. These proposals must now be reflected in the 2024-2029 strategic agenda to be discussed by the heads of State at the end of the week.

Following the end of the 2019-2024 term of office, which concluded with demonstrations in most of the Member States, it was important to see the European institutions proposing their analysis of the situation and setting priorities for the opening mandate. The Belgian Presidency of the Council took responsibility for proposing a vision for the future of agriculture, a view shared by a majority of Member States as well as Copa and Cogeca.

In a document narrowed down to 26 points, Copa and Cogeca support first and foremost the accurate analysis of the reasons for the agricultural demonstrations, the need to reposition agriculture as a strategic pillar of the EU in the current geopolitical context, and the importance of the CAP and the preservation of an appropriate budget in line with its objectives.

We note, with interest, the emphasis placed on the uptake of the bioeconomy and the circular economy, which took a back seat during the previous mandate, the balanced approach to trade and environmental issues, the emphasis placed on monitoring and reducing the administrative burden for farmers, and the importance given to generation renewal and research programmes. Finally, we welcome the Belgian Presidency's proposal for an analysis by the Commission of the food systems approach.

When reading the manifestos of the various political groups running in the elections, we regret that this document on the future of agriculture does not mention the key role of agricultural cooperatives and their crucial role for ensuring a more dynamic and competitive agriculture for years to come!

Additionally, from an institutional viewpoint, we call on EU leaders to fully endorse Copa and Cogeca’s request for the future institutions: a Commissioner for agriculture and rural areas is needed with a key role as Vice-President of the European Commission.

**-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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