

FROM FIELD TO FUTURE

Copa and Cogeca Vision for the future of EU Agriculture

*A Fair Competitiveness Deal for farmers
and agri-cooperatives ensuring balanced
economic, environmental and social
sustainability*



AGRICULTURE 2050

Introduction

The new Vision for EU Agriculture to be proposed by the European Commission must empower farmers and agricultural cooperatives with the tools they need to provide high-quality food for all EU citizens at affordable prices. It must ensure food safety, reduce administrative burdens, and secure fair incomes. Furthermore, it must support a just and balanced transition that allows farmers to look to the future with confidence and fosters generational renewal, driven by the competitiveness of our sector.

A vision that puts farmers and agri-cooperatives at the centre of European competitiveness!

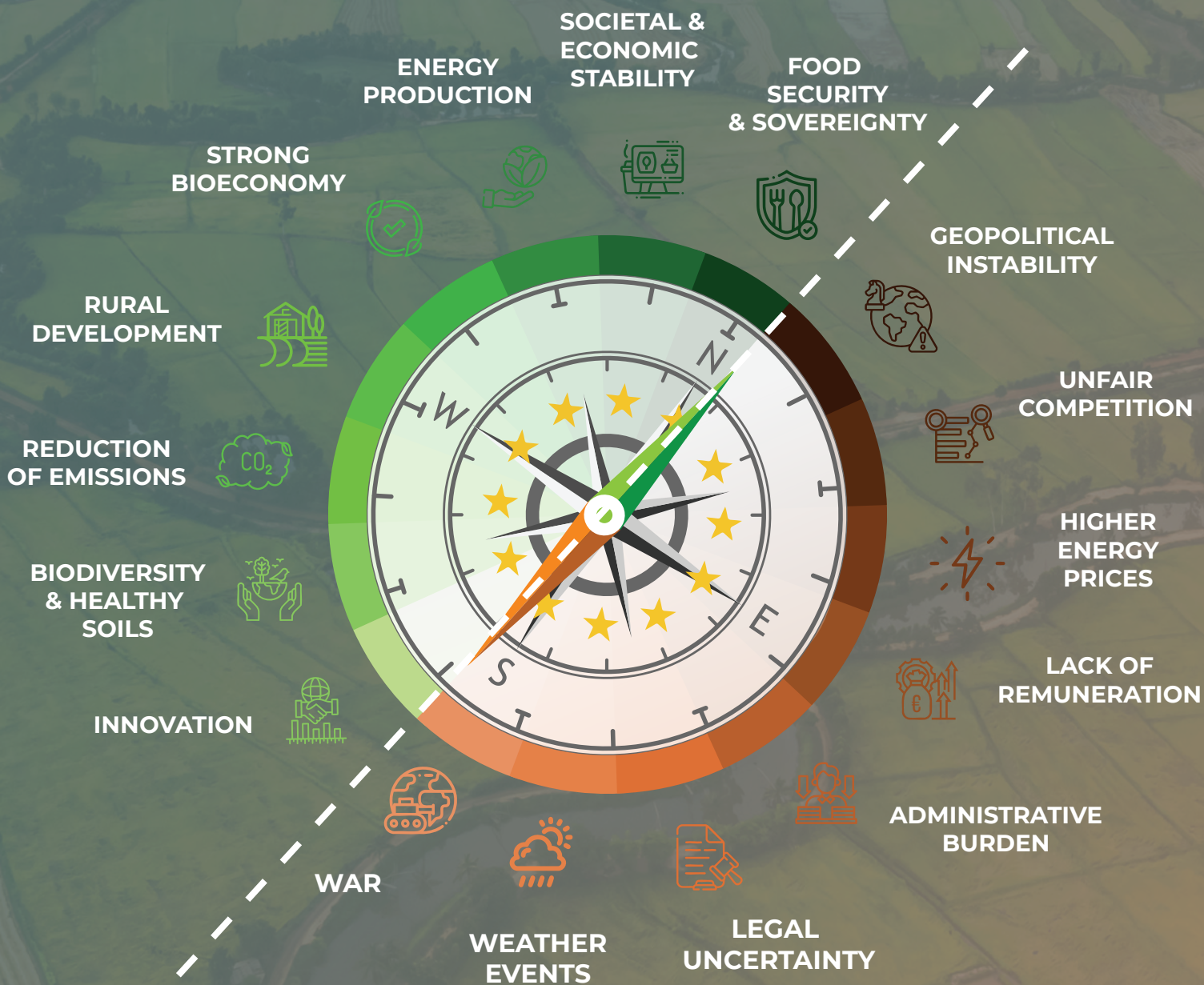
The farming sector wants to be the protagonist of a “Fair Competitiveness Deal for farmers and agri-cooperatives” that puts agriculture at the centre of the European project and ensures income, profitability, productivity and innovation to facilitate the green and digital transition.

To reach these objectives, this document builds on the publication of the Copa and Cogeca Manifesto for the 2024 European elections, the Belgian Presidency conclusions on the “Future of EU Agriculture”, the report of the Strategic Dialogue, together with key other reports by Letta, Draghi and Niinistö. The Hungarian Presidency conclusions on a “Farmer-focused, competitive, crisis-proof, sustainable and knowledge-based post 2027 Common Agricultural Policy” have kicked off the discussions on next CAP.

11 Pathways for the future:

1. **Simplification and new Governance:** Farmers and agri-cooperatives as protagonists of EU policies
2. **Increased funding of CAP budget line and additional funding outside the CAP** for additional requirements
3. **Strengthen the CAP** to ensure the competitiveness of EU agriculture and **improve farmers' position in the food chain**
4. Balancing **economic, environmental and social sustainability**
5. Seizing and enhancing the immense opportunities offered by **knowledge and technological innovation**
6. Boost the contribution of **EU farmers to renewable energy** and further develop the EU circular bioeconomy
7. Strengthen the **resilience and competitiveness of cooperative enterprises** operating in the agri-food sector
8. Invest and innovate in **vibrant rural areas** by improving infrastructure and services
9. A **strategy for generational renewal** in agriculture and in agri-cooperatives through competitiveness of our farms
10. Providing safe, nutritious, high-quality, **and affordable food to EU consumers**
11. **Fair Trade Policy:** a key pillar for an ambitious and competitive sector

FARMERS AND AGRI-COOPS OFFER TO SOCIETY...



...**BUT FACE MANY**
CHALLENGES

What farmers and agri-cooperatives offer to society

Agriculture has always been at the core of the European project because of its strategic importance. Agriculture is a primary pillar of the European economy.

There are 9.1 million farms operating across the EU which employ 8.7 million people (equating to 4.2 % of total employment). Of these, 95% are family farms involved in the production of arable, perennial crops and livestock. Europe boasts more than 23,000 agricultural cooperatives, employing over 607,000 people.

EU's rural areas are home to 137 million people representing almost 30% of its population and over 80% of its territory.

Every day, our farming community commits to providing safe, high-quality and nutritious food along with feed, fuel and fibre for European consumers and stands ready as a strategic asset for Europe and beyond. In an unprecedented geopolitical landscape and amidst global uncertainties, agriculture serves as a cornerstone for stability and sustainability on our continent.

With its position as a leading exporter of essential agricultural, fisheries and aquaculture products, alongside a food and beverage sector valued at a total of €222 billion, the sector also helps strengthen Europe's geopolitical significance while ensuring peace and stability across the globe.

In their daily work, farmers and agri-cooperatives:

- Contribute to food security and sovereignty in the EU and beyond while maintaining societal and economic stability
- Are ambassadors for vibrant rural areas
- Are champions of biodiversity and guardians of the environment
- Are examples of emission reduction, sequestration and climate-efficient production

- Produce sustainable energy, contribute to the bioeconomy, reduce dependency on fossil fuels

- Are innovators who seize the immense opportunities provided by new technologies

Our community of diverse women and men are valuable to Europe!

However, we need a better Europe! Europe must promote the competitiveness and productivity of farmers and agri-cooperatives. This is even more important as we strive to respond to the societal demand for more environmental sustainability.

To preserve and create future prospects for the EU agricultural community until 2050 and beyond, we need stability, predictability, trust, legal certainty and consistency from the European Institutions.

Turning challenges into opportunities

There are multifarious challenges and difficulties facing the farming community today. Farmers and agri-cooperatives are confronted with unparalleled convergences of economic, climate and social challenges: geopolitical instability, unfair competition, higher energy prices, lack of remuneration, administrative burdens, legal uncertainty and decreased consumption patterns.

All of this is compounded by increasingly frequent catastrophic weather events which have strong impacts on strategic European productions, a war in Europe and a conflict in the Middle East. These events remind us that the issue of food must remain high on the European political agenda!

There are three million fewer farms in the EU compared to 2010 (a reduction of 24.8%) with an increased average age of farmers, 33.2% being aged 65 years and older while a mere 11.9% of farm managers in the EU are under 40 years of age (source: Eurostat, 2020)¹.

Recent years have been characterised by an unprecedented peak in energy-related agricultural inputs costs and a prolonged period of high inflation affecting all farmers' costs and, in turn, leading to food prices taking their toll on consumers. Farmers face serious mental health risks from the constant demands of their job and being placed under the stress of unpredictable conditions, leading to an unacceptably high level of on-farm accidents. The 24/7 nature of farming leaves little time for rest and adds to the pressure. The high suicide risk among farmers is an alarming phenomenon to be considered in this context.

With the average farm income remaining nearly 60% below average incomes in the rest of the EU economy², many farmers are caught between escalating costs and market pressures created by a few highly concentrated retailers. Environmental legislation often gives rise to higher costs with limited options for implementing it. Additionally, certain aspects of the EU's trade policy risk putting unsustainable pressure on some of our essential products, increasing dependencies while hindering our ability to carry out the envisaged transition.

In recent decades, the agricultural sector has made significant strides in increasing agricultural productivity (+ 7.1% 2013-2022³), reducing CO2 emissions (-25% 1990-2019⁴) and using fewer veterinary antibiotics (-53% 2011-2022⁵) and Plant Protection Products (-38% 2011-2013⁶). However, challenges will continue to mount if not addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

From the outset of its 2019-2024 mandate, the European Commission set targets without placing equal emphasis on developing the means to achieve them and prioritising ecological sustainability over economic sustainability without

considering the consequences on our productive capacity.

The Green Deal for agriculture was a regulatory tsunami, with too many rushed consultations, top-down targets lacking assessment and proposals pushed through without being backed up by feasibility studies or adequate funding. The farmers who took to the streets in recent months have highlighted the vulnerability of our community exposed to the cumulative effects of policies, market conditions and geopolitical events, stressing the urgent need to be heard and understood.

These protests have made it clear that the European Union must shift the focus of its discussions back to rural areas and agriculture if it is to reclaim its agricultural compass. As President von der Leyen recently stated, "There is hardly a sector more important to our continent than agriculture. It is vital to our health, strategic to our economy, and essential for our self-sufficiency."

The Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture represents a first step away from the dogmatic, top-down approach of previous years, moving towards greater dialogue and a more strategic outlook for the agricultural sector. However, this should by no means replace our legislative community method and the important role that the EU legislators, Council and European Parliament need to play. This is fundamental.

At the same time, it is undeniable that the voice of agricultural representatives must be given particular attention in the context of agricultural governance, particularly looking to the future our farmers.

From this moment onwards, EU institutions must rebuild farmers' trust!

1 Source: All data from Eurostat "Key Figures on the European Food Chain 2023"

2 Source: European Commission, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/income-support/income-support-explained_en

3 Source: Analytical Brief N°5: Measuring agricultural productivity Insights into yields and total factor productivity in the EU – 25.10.2024

4 Source: <https://agridata.ec.europa.eu/extensions/DashboardIndicators/Climate.html>

5 Source: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/sales-veterinary-antimicrobial-agents-31-european-countries-2022-trends-2010-2022-thirteenth-esvac-report_en.pdf

6 Source: https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/pesticides/sustainable-use-pesticides/harmonised-risk-indicators/trends-eu_en

We expect the new European Commission to translate the strategic importance of agriculture, agri-cooperatives, and food into concrete actions. How can we prevent the decimation of our agricultural sector, reverse the troubling decline of young farmers, and avoid increasing imports and seeing production relocated to countries with lower standards and reaching a tipping point that could threaten European farming?

A shift in tone and pace is imperative by turning challenges into opportunities, ensuring that European agriculture remains a driving force in Europe

If we do not act decisively now, we risk suffering defeat in one of the greatest challenges of our time: ensuring food security for Europe in the face of a growing global population and maintaining stability for all.

Our Vision: A Competitive Agricultural Sector Guaranteeing Food Security towards 2050 and beyond

Farmers and their cooperatives have been actively engaged in producing nutritious, high-quality food for Europe, and beyond, while making the required transitions for climate and biodiversity. We advocate for European policies that look ahead and strategically support this ongoing transition and the competitiveness of the sector while strengthening farmers' position in the food value chain.

The pathway to climate neutrality by 2050 needs a robust and resilient agricultural sector fully integrated into the economy. Farmers and agri-cooperatives must be listened to as the protagonists of shaping policies that impact the sector.

We need a vision for the Future of EU Agriculture that adheres to the views of the farming community. Our Vision for the Future of EU Agriculture looks to the long-term objective for the EU to be climate-neutral by 2050 – an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions while not losing sight of ensuring fair competitiveness for

farmers by 2050.

With 25 annual harvests to go before 2050, we can support the EU economy in reaching climate neutrality, strengthen the EU's agricultural production capacity across all Member States and Regions in the EU and acknowledge geographical and territorial differences.

We wish to have an EU Agricultural sector in 2050 that:

- Is competitive and contributes substantially to the Union's economic growth

- Ensures farmers have a fair income and their businesses grow in the EU and in global markets

- Provides a fair standard of living, secures availability of supplies and provides consumers with food at reasonable prices in line with the CAP objectives set out in the EU Treaty

- Operates in a balanced and fair food supply chain featuring an equal distribution of costs and value and which is exempt from Unfair Trade Practices

- Maintains its diversity and continues to produce according to the highest quality and safety standards in the world

- Makes the most of knowledge and innovation to support its economic, environmental and social sustainability

- Is attractive to current and new farmers (including young and women) who see a positive future in the sector and invest accordingly

- Is the beating heart of thriving rural areas and receives social recognition for the public and private goods offered to EU and non-EU citizens

- Is recognised as the driving force behind a greener and more sustainable continent

- Enable a confident and proud outlook towards the future

11 PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE OF EU AGRICULTURE



1



SIMPLIFICATION & NEW GOVERNANCE

2



INCREASE CAP BUDGET & ADDITIONAL FUNDING

5



KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION

4



ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

3



STRONG CAP FOR COMPETITIVENESS & FAIR FOOD CHAIN

6



RENEWABLE ENERGY & BIOECONOMY

7



RESILIENT & COMPETITIVE COOPERATIVES

8



VIBRANT RURAL AREAS

11



FAIR TRADE POLICY

10



SAFE, NUTRITIOUS, HIGH QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE FOOD

9



GENERATIONAL RENEWAL

1 Simplification and New Governance: Farmers and agri-cooperatives as protagonists of EU policies

Farmers and agri-cooperatives will be the ones to implement the vast majority of the policies, legislation and pathways foreseen in the expected Vision for EU Agriculture.

The starting point should be making the best use of our sector and the progress made in the past decades by our farming community; we need to agree with the sector and the EU Institutions on an appropriate pace for the transition to be done in consultation and collaboration with farmers and agri-cooperatives. This should entail dedicated financing and support and require recognising and rewarding farmers' contribution to society.

Looking to the future, we fully agree with the aim of the Commission for the 2024-2029 mandate to focus on reducing administrative burdens and simplifying legislation. This must be the driving force propelling all actions.

Many of the pieces of legislation proposed in the past mandate will enter into force in the coming years. This will have an impact on our farmers on the ground and risk contradicting the simplification objectives of the European Commission, thus posing further administrative risks for our sector.

The European Commission must reduce current administrative burdens and stop additional ones from materialising to rule out any new legislation which would lead to more bureaucracy. A new approach to inspections and the rectification of simple errors is needed. Our organisations stand ready to play our part in a responsible manner through making further proposals. As regards governance, we reiterate our request that DG Agriculture to have a leadership on Agriculture and Rural Development policies but also on Food matters, ensuring consistency with the key role of agriculture for territories, rural areas

and food security. The same key role should be assured for the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee and Agriculture Ministers with dedicated competences on all files related to agri-food chains.

We call for a governance model and partnership with the EU Institutions that:

- **Ensures farmers and agri-cooperatives full participation in the EU decision-making process** and build upon their input when formulating policy proposals. We need a proactive and meaningful consultation and improved alignment between theory and practical realities. This must start from the future European Board of Agriculture and Food.

- **Guarantees in light of our history, diversity, representativeness and democratic governance - that Copa and Cogeca play a central role in all consultative bodies** as major organisations representing farmers and agri-cooperatives from all across the EU, showcasing the multidimensionality of EU farming.

- **Involves a democratic decision-making process and full transparency** when working, allowing members to be consulted and preventing membership participation in a personal capacity.

- **Boosts participation of economic operators from the agri-food chain.**

- Requires guaranteeing that any legislative proposal affecting **agriculture be accompanied by a cumulative, detailed, economic and social and legal impact assessment** and scientific studies with updates issued following any changes to the decision-making process. These should also pay particular attention to the impact on EU food security and Member States and take broader rural impacts into account.

- **Supports, strengthens and improves the functioning of Agricultural Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs)** that are and need to remain an essential tool in future policy discussions.

They focus on identifying and tackling more sectorial specific, technical, and market issues in agriculture. They should not be undermined by any new structure, such as European Board of Agriculture and Food (EBAF). Rather, they should be reinforced to furthermore horizontal level work through their targeted, sectorial expertise, ensuring perspectives on the ground underpin EU policies.

The above principles need to be fully respected if a European Board of Agriculture and Food is set up and this must not replace the role of EU legislators and scientific advisory bodies.

2

Increased funding of CAP budget line and additional funding outside the CAP for additional requirements

Agriculture is a strategic sector of the economy, be it at EU or national level. Ensuring ambitious independent common funding for all common policies in the EU is of paramount importance. This is especially relevant for CAP funding and the need to safeguard the integrity and functioning of the Single Market and ensure a level playing field. This is not only very important in the context of the current MFF and the post-2027 MFF, but also particularly in view of the budgetary implications of rising inflation and geo-political disruptions caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East.

In this respect, the following actions must be undertaken by the European Commission:

1. Ensuring an increased dedicated CAP budget for the next MFF post 2027 - separated and independent - that matches the level of ambition and is adapted to inflation.

The fact that EU agriculture receives support equivalent to just 0.4% of EU GDP (0,33% if considering the budget amount

for 2023⁷⁾ and this support generates a relevant added value quota of the EU GDP (1.3%) clearly demonstrating the EU's added value of this policy.

Despite the increase in societal requests for the CAP and the challenges facing the sector, we have seen a consistent reduction in support under the CAP Budget. This needs to be corrected!

Entertaining any idea of reallocating EU expenditure within a Single Fund and single National Programming for each Member State to an all-encompassing fund would be contrary to the targeting of support necessary

in some policy areas, particularly the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). It could lead to disastrous consequences for our sector, more complexity and uncertainty for our 9 million farms (and National Authorities), fragmentation of the Single Market and increased differences among Member States. It would also undermine the multiannual investment approach so necessary for farmers to improve their competitiveness and become more sustainable.

2. Increased synergies with other funds (for example NextGenerationEU, Just Transition Funds and Cohesion funds to deliver on the digital and green transition)

3. A proposal for an Agriculture Just Transition Fund (AJTF) and a Nature Restoration Fund both outside the CAP budget to further facilitate and support the transition of all agriculture sectors, regions and Member States towards more sustainable production methods in line with the strategic role of agriculture. These funds must be linked to voluntary programmes for farmers and consider the environmental commitments already undertaken with a bottom-up approach in order to promote the competitiveness of European sector.

The funds should not have an impact on the CAP Budget allocations which need to be protected and ringfenced for the farming community while keeping the flexibility

within the budget. As the name suggests the AJTF should focus only on facilitating agricultural sector's transition. It is essential that decisions affecting farming be taken within agricultural governance. The long-term transition in the sector (that goes beyond the MFF cycle) must be supported and facilitated through independent funds separate from the policy budgetary lines.

4. The establishment of an effective bank lending framework. The European Investment Bank's decision to identify agriculture and the bioeconomy as key priorities under its 2024-2027 Strategic Roadmap is welcome and work should be done in tandem with the farming community and, specifically, agri-cooperatives to see this opportunity lead to action on the ground. Agriculture should be able to benefit from support out of other funds and investments should be allocated to climate adaptation measures with targeted financing earmarked for the sector.

5. The farming community should **also have a key role both in shaping policies on sustainable finance** and particularly in the implementation phase of legislation which impacts on the sector such as CSRD, CSDDD and Taxonomy.

3

Strengthen the CAP to ensure the competitiveness of EU agriculture and improve farmers' position in the food chain

The primary role of agriculture, even in a post 2027 scenario, continues to be that of ensuring food security through a more competitive, sustainable, resilient, diverse and resource efficient agricultural sector, whilst integrating the sector's positive environment and public goods provided within vibrant rural areas.

Agricultural-related work must be possible in all EU regions and territories as it provides public goods and ecosystem services essential to upholding the integrity of the Union.

To underline this key role, the CAP objectives have been set in the Treaties and fleshed out with specific objectives included in the recent CAP reform.

Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU sets out the CAP's specific objectives. As such, increasing agricultural productivity, stabilising markets and ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers, availability of supplies and reasonable prices for consumers have rightfully been at the core of the Common Agricultural Policy over the years and this should remain the case.

In this respect, action must be undertaken by the European Commission with:

1. A resilient and stable CAP which remains fundamental in ensuring competitiveness and guaranteeing a decent income.

Ensuring commonality common objectives, rules and financing, the post-2027 CAP needs to strive for a vibrant and sustainable sector. To this end, the following should be observed:

- Maintain direct support for all farmers under the CAP regardless of their size and type of production, particularly in the form of area-based direct payments. For Copia-Cogeca, those who need it most are the active farmers who help make European agricultural production sustainable, achieve objectives across all pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) and meet the objectives of ensuring food sovereignty in the EU as well as those set forth in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union while keeping rural areas vibrant regardless of size, location or the nature of production. These farms are the basis of the EU's agricultural diversity and must be preserved.

- The possibility to support sectors in difficulty and/or with specific constraints must be maintained.



- **CAP conditionality requirements should be re-assessed to reduce** excessive implementation requirements, administrative burden and costs.

- **Focus on voluntariness and incentives.** Provide actual incentives instead of mere compensation for additional costs and income foregone via voluntary measures.

- **EU market-based policies** which allow for targeted, flexible and more effective and responsive **market management** tools to help protect farmers' incomes.

- **Risk management should be fostered by Member States** faced with increased and diverse risks. With the increasingly frequent extreme weather events, farmers need to be able to have a toolbox of workable cost-effective risk management tools at their disposal (i.e. insurances, mutual funds and other tools). This should come on top of existing market management tools and not undermine existing national schemes. While protecting national specificities and schemes, **complementary EU** common tools should be utilised to boost the effectiveness of these measures.

- **An adequate increased agricultural reserve** to address unforeseen and disruptive market developments is needed. Payments from the agricultural reserve must be disbursed in a more cost-efficient and rapid manner: when the use of the agricultural reserve is triggered, Member States should be granted the possibility of topping up the agricultural reserve with existing support schemes. Refinancing of the reserve must not be done by reducing the CAP budget.

- **Promote sectoral interventions, Producer Organisations and agri-cooperatives that are concentrating production, adding value to it and marketing it** jointly through commercial producer organisations, creating economies of scale and contributing to increasing the bargaining power of farmers in the supply

chain. Budgetary allocations for sectorial interventions need to be improved to enhance their effectiveness.

2. Improvements to the position of European Farmers along the food chain and a recognition of the essential **role of cooperatives and producer organisations in reducing costs, increasing efficiency and improving market prices.** Costs and benefits of all sustainability measures should be fairly distributed among all actors of the chain with a specific focus on farmers' remuneration. Unfortunately, we continue to see a significant percentage of 63% of UTPs is still being applied by retailers and wholesalers⁸.

This should be done by:

- **Having the new European Commission immediately propose new rules to better enforce protection against UTPs, particularly in cross-border transactions and propose targeted changes to the CMO** Regulation along with proposals for other CAP-related basic acts that may contribute to reducing transaction costs and correcting imbalances in the value chain. These measures were already announced in the context of the spring simplification package and are eagerly awaited by the sector.

- Proposing to **effectively ban below cost selling in commercial transactions with a corresponding revision of the list of prohibited practices in the Unfair Trading Practices Directive by 2025.** This could be instrumental in securing a better remuneration for farmers **in all EU Member States** and recognising that the relation between a farmer and its cooperative is not a commercial transaction due to the fact that cooperatives belong to farmers. Improving enforcement via a continuous monitoring of implementation efforts is fundamental. The work of the EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory is welcome, and this should provide effective recommendations to National Authorities.

⁸ Source: Commission report on the implementation of the Directive on unfair trading practices (UTP) in the food supply chain. – 24th April 2024

-Promoting farmer-to-farmer cooperation and structuring in cooperatives and producer organisations as one of the best and most effective ways to improve the position of farmers in the food chain.

- Promoting clarification, legal certainty and flexibility in **implementing effective derogations from competition law for producers in line with art. 210a of the CMO regulation**. Concrete test cases should be developed together with engaged sectors. The revision should also cover further sustainability initiatives.

- **Streamlining of quality schemes requested by retailers** (i.e. Global Gap and similar certifications). These requirements are putting pressure on the farming community with different and sometime impossible requests.

- **Promote and incentivise short value chains and farmers' market networks** that have proved to be an important market outlet for farmers, a positive model for consumers as well as a solution to combat food waste.

4 Balancing economic, environmental and social sustainability

The farming community is committed to supporting the EU's transition to climate neutrality by 2050".

We are convinced that agriculture and nature conservation can go hand in hand, but we must also look into the challenges that farmers face so they can carry on producing in an evolving context.

In the past, European legislation has primarily prioritised climate and environmental protection without weighing up the economic consequences for agricultural farms and production capacity.

In the future, European legislation for

agriculture should instead focus on climate and nature protection that builds on production-integrated measures and respects the principle of subsidiarity and property rights. In addition to climate change mitigation, there needs to be stronger focus on climate change adaptation. The implementation of adaptation measures can only take place through individual and voluntary action but requires financial support. Managing climate risks is a necessary condition for improving living standards, fighting inequality and protecting people.

We propose the following:

1. A Strategic Climate Policy for Agriculture should be launched that balances climate goals with food security, economic resilience, and rural development and recognises the unique characteristics of the agricultural sector. This Strategic Climate Policy should analyse how to best use the current legislative instruments to achieve climate and economic goals. while upholding the principle of "protection through use" and "voluntary action before regulatory action". **This should include an effective climate adaptation strategy with improved risk management and infrastructure** focusing on resilience and streamlined reporting, coordinating data and integrating tools like satellite information and AI.

2. A voluntary, unified, easily administrable and harmonised system of certified carbon removals and GHG reduction across the EU capable of promoting an effective further uptake by farmers and agri-cooperatives of carbon farming activities through a market-based approach.

3. Creating better and realistic pathways for farmers to overcome their challenges in terms of water quality, environment and biodiversity. Recent and ongoing legislation like the Nature Restoration law, the Nitrates Directive, the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive are unworkable and rigid pieces of legislation which are not conducive

towards building more positive prospects amidst the rapidly changing conditions in Member States. We would suggest the Commission creates solutions rather than sticking to restrictions and operational gridlocks. Protecting the use of soil and fight land take is essential.

4. An EU vision for a thriving livestock sector and prospects for livestock farmers

For the EU livestock sector, it is essential to be clear on the principles that should inspire the coming Vision for Agriculture and the Strategy for livestock.

It is time for a positive outlook that encourages farmers from all types of animal production to grow, improve and take pride in their work. The following key principles should be observed:

- **Animal-sourced foods play an essential role in human nutrition**, contributing significantly to food and nutritional security and being advantageous for demographics with elevated nutritional needs.

- **Livestock production plays a central role in European agriculture.** Both livestock and plant production are interdependent.

- **Recognising both the positive and negative impacts of livestock production is essential**, requiring robust methods to measure factors like emissions, biodiversity, resource use, animal health & welfare, productivity and regional diversity.

- **Our livestock sector relies on coherence between EU policies**, such as the Common Agricultural Policy and legislation on International Trade, Animal Health, Animal Welfare or environmental aspects.

- **Animal welfare is a key priority for European farmers and cooperatives and the EU has some of the highest standards globally.** Current legislation supports harmonisation and improvement in animal welfare across the region.

- **A science-based approach to animal health and welfare and the economic**

competitiveness of farms are of equal importance and legislation should follow both principles.

5. A coherent strategy for a water-resilient agriculture

that takes into due account the key role of this resource for food production. As the climate crisis deepens, floods and droughts are set to increase in intensity. As a result, it is crucial to introduce a common water management strategy that considers the good practices implemented by different Member States to safeguard agricultural production. A plan to maximise the benefits of reusing irrigated resources through optimal and efficient use of water networks and reservoirs for uses pertaining to human consumption, basins, irrigation and energy.

Financial resources for investment in conservation plans, leakage reduction, reuse, innovative irrigation, and storage facilities must be established.

This should consider the fundamental need to invest in water infrastructure (especially to avoid or reduce impacts in the event of extreme weather events). It is necessary to improve the public image of irrigation and its contribution to sustainability in its broadest sense.

6. Balanced market-driven development of the organic sector:

since organic farming is the only one certified and governed at EU level among the several sustainable production methods, it is important to maintain its economic viability by avoiding a drop in producer prices and protecting existing agricultural investments in the sector through a market-driven approach. This should be done by stimulating demand for organic products and stimulating production through establishing an efficient supply chain and ensuring fair support for both existing and in-conversion farmers.

7. Copa and Cogeca will be vigilant vis-à-vis the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food who has been tasked with proposing **an EU-wide benchmarking system.** There is the need to clarify the purpose and

final objectives of this system and assess current existing sustainability and quality schemes. Any benchmarking system should aim to increase the competitiveness of EU agriculture and help produce affordable, high-quality products while mitigating the proliferation of schemes. It should follow key principles such as: being voluntary, reducing constraints and administrative burdens on farmers and agri-cooperatives particularly from existing legislation, structuring sustainable requirements from the value chains, using existing data and data collection systems and acknowledging that EU Member States have very different landscapes and prerequisites for sustainable food production and that all production systems can deliver sustainability. It should explore the potential of harmonisation and standardisation starting from farms as well as benchmarking with third countries.

5

Seizing and enhancing the immense opportunities offered by knowledge and technological innovation

In order to strive towards a competitive and sustainable form of agriculture, it is necessary to promote a modern vision of agriculture and innovative ways of farming and breeding. This vision must be the milestone and the core of any decisions for the sector.

Digital farming represents an unprecedented opportunity to create value and business opportunities by applying data-driven solutions. Moreover, adapted genetic, robotic, digital and agronomic solutions, use of drones need to be boosted to reconcile agricultural production with environmental protection.

Farmers are willing to facilitate the ecological transition while maintaining a high level of quality food production. To this end they need tools to tackle the effects of

climate change. European farmers have been working for decades to reduce their reliance on conventional plant protection products (PPPs) and to adopt alternative, low-risk products. However, the availability of safe, effective and economically viable alternatives is very limited, posing a significant challenge for growers who are in an emergency situation due to the lack of effective products. Climate change is also shifting pest and disease patterns, further increasing the need for innovative solutions to safeguard biodiversity and food security.

We have gone from having around 900 active substances available in the EU in 2001 to fewer than 470 today⁹!

The reality is that alternatives, such as biocontrol methods, are becoming available at an unacceptably slow pace. On average, EU farmers lose around 16 conventional active substances each year while only gaining around 6 new alternatives¹⁰ - most of which are not suitable for open-field use and currently do not compare on efficacy.

We need action on:

1. Speeding up and simplifying the authorisation of safe, effective and economically viable alternatives to conventional Plant Protection Products and ensuring their availability

The placing on the market of effective low-risk and organic active substances, biocontrol, and precision techniques should be facilitated. Accordingly, it shall reduce the length of authorisation processes, create a predictable and robust investment climate, and boost precision farming and the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

This should be done via:

- **Increased access to effective low-risk plant protection innovation** which can enhance the EU's competitiveness and sustainability and help achieve

⁹ Marchand, P. A., (2022). Evolution of plant protection active substances in Europe: the disappearance of chemicals in favour of biocontrol agents, *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* (2023) 30:1–17: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11356-022-24057-7>

¹⁰ Ibid as foot note 7

environmental goals. Combining solutions such as innovative agronomic practices, digitalisation, resilient varieties or research into new agricultural markets may represent an alternative with less of an impact on the environment and a reduction in risk for applicants. **The approval process for new Plant Protection Products must be accelerated substantially at National and/or EU level.** No active substance should be withdrawn without an equally effective alternative being present on the market for farmers.

- We need a framework that allows for these faster processes. Copa and Cogeca have recently been noticing widespread distrust in the science-based control assessment system at EU level. Rather than the current trend of carrying out hazard-based assessments to renew plant protection products, we advocate for a science-based risk assessment where both hazard and exposure are taken into consideration.

- Mutual recognition and improvement of market access for minor uses: EU farmers are very effective in producing speciality crops and supplying the market with a broad range of healthy and nutritious food. We regret the fact that there is not yet a common EU approach to support this important niche market. In this respect, it would certainly also be useful to improve the procedures relating to the use of existing substances (minor uses) and those relating to mutual recognition in international trade in line with WTO standards.

- As biocontrol may be one of the most feasible low-risk alternatives to conventional products, the current regulatory framework needs to be adapted, or a new one developed, to speed up the authorisation of safe, effective and affordable biocontrol solutions that can help maintain farm profitability without compromising safety, health or environmental protection.

2. Achieving innovation in the plant breeding sector, including a robust, proportionate and scientific regulatory framework for NGTs, is among the levers that will enable European agriculture to successfully make the transition to a more resilient and sustainable form of farming across all sectors and regions while mitigating climate change. Research in plant breeding sectors should be promoted.

3. Boosting the use of data in agriculture and agri-cooperatives and implement potential steps outlined in the “Data Act” which is a sign of progress for farmers need to retain right of control over their data considering the sensitive nature of it, thus adhering to the principles of the Code of Conduct. Datasets need to be aggregated and anonymised where possible.

4. Fostering partnerships between farmer organisations, public research institutions, and private companies to accelerate innovation and technology transfer to bridge the gap between research findings and applicable solutions for farmers and improve alignment between research and policy ambitions. By the same token, joint funding initiatives should be encouraged to support high-risk, high-reward research projects that address pressing agricultural challenges (i.e. next Framework Programme 10)

5. Strengthening farm advisory services and strengthening peer to peer exchanges to make information and recent findings on promising and sustainable agricultural practices available. The implementation of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) enhanced within independent farm advisory services, including those promoted by farmers’ organisations and agri-cooperatives, should also be strengthened to deliver on improved knowledge exchange.



6. Boosting Decision Support System in Agriculture (DSS): These tools provide better management of production specifications and crop accounting, i.e. the economic sustainability of the enterprise and farm register management.

6

Boost the contribution of EU farmers to renewable energy and further develop the EU circular bioeconomy

For the EU to reach its climate and energy objectives, all renewable energy sources must be used optimally. In this regard, the major role agriculture, horticulture and forestry can play in achieving these goals should be recognised. At the same time, the deployment of new energy capacity in Europe must be balanced with other crucial aspects for European citizens and farmers, such as food security and protecting agricultural land and forestry production.

The transition to renewable energy will require a mix of many different energy sources and diversified revenues. Sustainable certified biomass of European origin and anaerobic digestion are a great additional asset to have on top of photovoltaic systems as they can provide storable energy and serve as a baseload[1]. We need to strike a balance between food, feed, energy and recognising the positive role of livestock farming in recovering nutrients and ensuring circularity.

Farmers are located in rural areas and are therefore often at the end of the grid or even off-grid. That makes not only make electricity provision or adopting renewables challenging, but it also impedes them in supplying sustainable energy generated on their farms (e.g., biogas, solar, wind energy, geothermal heat, green hydrogen, or cogeneration) to local communities or urban areas. Fostering renewable energy generation in rural areas requires development of low-carbon infrastructure, electrification, and streamlining

permitting between government levels to allow farmers to scale electrification and sustainable energy sources at farm-level. The points mentioned below are crucial in this regard:

1. A coherent approach based on the principle of technological neutrality should be implemented in all EU proposals to diversify and boost energy supply recognising the key role of bioenergy, crop-based biofuels, biomethane, and biogas and acknowledging the potential of decentralised on-farm renewable energy production. The bioeconomy should be an integral part of this approach.

2. Boosting the bioeconomy rather than a pure focus on decarbonisation will be decisive in having the economy transition away from fossil fuels and fossil-based raw materials. In this regard, the presentation of the Bioeconomy Strategy by 2025 is welcomed.

3. Promote a secure and regular trade flow of fertilisers at competitive prices to guarantee agricultural production and food security. As the EU is dependent on natural resources such as phosphorus and energy, the EU must put in place a long-term policy to promote diversification of sourcing such as processing livestock effluents (Renure technologies), using organic fertilisation or further decarbonising making sure to not compromise the competitiveness of European farmers. The provenance of fertilisers in the EU could be diversified, starting by giving a degree of predictability to exporting third countries.

4. The agricultural sector as a strategically important one can also **provide decentralised on-farm energy solutions** or renewable energy. There is a lot of potential on the roofs of farms and barns to produce electricity, or to have on-farm photovoltaic energy. This potential should be unlocked with investment support in the grid or low-carbon infrastructure so it can be used by rural communities and urban communities. To trigger the necessary amount of investments

and looking at de-risking strategies to make them as appealing as possible for banks and financial entities, **community building solutions** -should be promoted, following a cross-border approach, such as with **Renewable Energy Communities**, in particular. These bodies can help improve social resilience in rural areas, particularly tackling energy bills for rural citizens as well as creating new revenues for EU farmers and boosting and speeding up renewable energy production in Europe.

7

Strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of cooperatives operating in the agri-food sector

Agricultural cooperatives play a pivotal role in ensuring that farmers receive a larger share of the value added in the food chain, and in preventing unfair trading practices by providing the farmers with more bargaining power.

Furthermore, it is imperative to recognise that agricultural cooperatives play a pivotal role in promoting the sustainability of the sector. These enterprises, created to respond to primary production's needs, owned and democratically managed by farmers, offer a collective approach to addressing various challenges and seizing opportunities. By addressing economic, environmental, and social challenges, European agri-cooperatives can help create a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system.

However, to ensure the sustainable competitiveness of the agri-food and forestry sectors, it is imperative to identify and implement the necessary tools and enablers that will facilitate its transition to a more sustainable and resilient food system. This necessitates a comprehensive approach taken by EU policy makers, which addresses various interconnected factors, including policy coherence, market access, innovation, and infrastructure development. Following the recent European Parliament elections and the

formation of a new European Commission, it is imperative to acknowledge the crucial role that agri-cooperatives play in our sectors and in the sustainable development of our societies and economies.

Moreover, to bolster the competitiveness of cooperatives in the agri-food sector, maximise their contributions to sustainable growth and avoid jeopardising the public goods and ecosystem services they create, it is essential that:

- **EU institutions consider the specific needs and governance aspects of cooperatives enterprises.** This includes recognising the unique structure and objectives of agri-cooperatives and tailoring policies accordingly.

- **An innovation-driven, science-based, and committed environment policy** be designed and implemented. This will enable agri-cooperatives to fully unleash their potential in delivering sustainable projects and products.

- **Enabling regulations and support schemes be seen as essential** in the fields of energy efficiency, climate actions, digital infrastructure and development, biodiversity, and environmental actions. These measures will help agri-cooperatives adopt sustainable practices, reduce their environmental footprint, and improve their competitiveness.

- The **organisation of sectors in agricultural cooperatives, Producer Organisations (POs) and Associations of Producer Organisations (APOs)** be strengthened and encouraged. Specific support and tools for them, like sectoral interventions, should also be developed.

By prioritising these factors, the EU can create an environment that supports the growth and success of agri-cooperatives, fostering a more sustainable and prosperous future for our sectors and societies.

8

Invest and innovate in vibrant rural areas by improving infrastructure and services

Farmers and their cooperatives are crucial for economic development and territorial cohesion in the EU. As the backbone of thriving rural communities, they require suitable living and working conditions, as well as access to services and education. Farmers also face significant mental health risks due to a combination of challenging conditions unique to their profession. The demands of a 24/7 job leave little time for rest, not to mention the adverse and unpredictable climate events which add further stress and physical risk. Farmers also contend with a lack of recognition and limited rural development, compounded by severe staff and skills shortages. Many feel isolated and targeted. Supporting young and women farmers is essential to ensure a diverse and resilient agricultural sector for the future!

Strong rural areas depend on improved access to basic services, such as mobility, education, and childcare, along with maintaining a reliable transport network. Agriculture and rural communities have traditionally been interlinked and their future vibrancy will depend on decarbonisation (construction or renovation of buildings, purchasing of electric vehicles, electrification of processes, creation of methanisation units, agricultural equipment), a sustainable transition (reduction of inputs, eco-design, recovery of co-products), digitalisation (broadband, automation, artificial intelligence, robotics) and transforming collection systems (storage and production tools).

To this end, the following is needed:

1. Enhance the quality of life and combat the demographic decline in rural areas by improving access to basic services, such as healthcare, education, housing, mobility

and childcare for rural populations as well as broadband in order to attract and keep young generations, including farmers, in rural areas. The Cohesion Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund are key in this regard. This should be accompanied by a better access to credit (low-cost loan policy), finance and land for farmers.

2. Strengthening the role of women in rural areas. The future EU agriculture sector must be inclusive, ensuring recognition and opportunities for all members of rural society. Women in the farming community often face a triple divide: rural, gender and digital challenges. Many women juggle dual roles as rural entrepreneurs, farmers and caregivers. However, their contribution to farming, rural communities and economy often goes unnoticed. Future policies should address these challenges and acknowledge the essential positive impact women have on agriculture and rural areas. Supporting a healthy work-life balance, reducing barriers to entry and enabling greater access to resources are essential not only to sustaining women's involvement in agriculture businesses but also to advancing social sustainability in communities. Furthermore, promoting women's leadership in both the agricultural sector and policy-making positions is key to achieving a more balanced, resilient and forward-looking rural economy.

3. Within the next EU mandate, an EU rural infrastructure plan should be proposed, reinforcing and implementing the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas by 2040. This will require massive investment in dedicated infrastructures and support from the Cohesion Fund and the European Regional Development Fund.

4. A Rural training plan should be devised to support the economic activity of farmers and cooperatives and build attractive rural areas for new generations.



5. A **“Rural Test”** ahead of a new **Multiannual Financial Framework** and other legislative proposals. Subsequent to this, the rural inclusion performance of current and new legislation will be tested (rural proofing). Specific attention should be given to urbanised areas and the impact of urbanisation and the protection of open space.

6. Improving access to land and developing a **European strategy on land take to reach the objective of zero land take by 2050** preventing undermining use of agriculture land. This should ensure farmers have access to their land/soil, giving them the conditions to implement sustainable soil management practices and avoiding losing their land at the advantage of other uses by other sectors.

9

A strategy for generational renewal in agriculture and in agri-cooperatives through competitiveness

To guarantee generational renewal, economic prospects must be within reach. No new farmers will enter the sector without the prospect of staying on the market even if provided with all setting-up tools.

Copa and Cogeca support the presentation of a strategy for generational renewal in agriculture and in agri-cooperatives. This should include:

1. A commitment to conducting a **‘socioeconomic young farmers check’** in all upcoming agricultural, climate or environmental legislation.

2. **Loan packages to young and new farmers.**

3. **Greater support for young and women farmers and business start-ups** and an improved tax environment for young entrepreneurs. To strengthen the position of all farmers as entrepreneurs in agriculture and rural areas, there is a need

to ensure gender equality and promote better access to finance.

4. Educational and **life-long learning for farming** and related professions.

5. In **addition to CAP support, targeted measures for young farmers** should be explored; these measures should be implemented together with a farm succession scheme to speed up the take-up of farms from older generations by including attractive collaborative support and/or generational renewal support serving all parties involved.

Providing safe, nutritious, high-quality, and affordable food from EU farmers and agri-coops to EU consumers

10

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), enshrined in EU Treaties, have been instrumental in achieving the objectives of food security and food safety as well as ensuring the resilience of the EU agriculture and aquaculture sectors and offering a wide consumer choice.

To continue guaranteeing food safety, as well as food and nutrition security into the future, the following action should be implemented:

1. Upholding the high **EU food safety standards while combatting any food fraud.**

2. Enforcing the provisions of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 aimed guaranteeing that **food information is trustworthy, science-based, transparent, and not misleading for consumers.** To this end, extend mandatory origin labelling, with an EU/non-EU level as starting baseline, to all foodstuffs, while allowing for necessary flexibility for sectors to adopt a higher level of mandatory origin labelling (i.e., country of origin). Digital tools could support the provision of voluntary product information to consumers.

3. Establishing EU-wide legal terms for protecting the names of animal-sourced foods, similar to the protection already enjoyed by dairy products. The misuse of names related to agriculture, professions, by-products as well as unfair comparison and evocations should be prohibited.

4. Carrying out thorough impact assessments of food innovations aimed at mimicking animal-based foods in terms of the risks linked to their placing on the EU market. In the case of lab-grown products mimicking animal-based foods, any possible authorisation for these products must be preceded by a comprehensive impact assessment of the ethical, social, food safety, environmental and economic dimensions as well as in consultation with Member States, other relevant EU Institutions and stakeholders.

5. Supporting the EU's quality and production diversity by promoting the use of the existing varieties, breeds, food processing techniques, and food cultures and regional origin of food, so as to support the availability of diversified and balanced diets.

6. An inclusive and well-funded promotion policy that equally and proportionately supports all sectors and sustainable agricultural practices. The Promotion Policy should continue to serve its primary objective, namely boosting the competitiveness of the Union's agricultural sector on both the internal and external markets by increasing awareness and recognition of the Union quality schemes. This Policy should also communicate the high quality of European agricultural products to consumers and boost overall recognition and trade opportunities.

7. Encouraging the uptake of dietary patterns that promote nutrient adequacy, diversity, balanced energy intake and moderation from an early age while honouring individual and cultural preferences as well as culinary traditions. The consumption of animal-sourced foods, which are nutrient dense and of a mainly

minimally processed nature, is an integral part of human diets for achieving adequate nourishment.

8. Develop a definition of and guidance for highly processed (i.e., "ultra-processed") foods.

9. Establishing a sustainable public food procurement framework with minimum criteria. shifting the focus from cheapest option to best (= sustainable/regional) option.

Fair Trade Policy: a key pillar for an ambitious and competitive sector

11

The positive agri-food trade balance of the EU should not be taken for granted. It is a result of decades-long efforts in establishing market access in third countries and promoting EU quality products and production practices. Finding new markets for the EU continues to provide opportunities for generating growth and value added for European farmers.

However, it also must be acknowledged that international trade does not benefit all farmers equally and that our farmers face increasing competition in the international market due to the loss of competitiveness and the difficult geopolitical situation. Trade and third country market access should benefit the sector more evenly and contribute to its competitiveness.

Consistency between our internal and external policies is key for ensuring that trade delivers for our producers and does not hinder their competitiveness and capacity to invest in the transition. While operating in local conditions, EU farmers and cooperatives are exposed to global markets and therefore global perspectives and the circumstances of our key trading partners and global agri-food producers must be well considered when devising internal policies.

Action is needed to:

1. Reevaluate and carefully calibrate the way trade agreements are negotiated and concluded.

The EU needs to consider the specificity of our sector and the particular situation of sensitive sectors in each agreement and in our trade relationships more broadly.

2. The importance of agriculture in trade negotiations needs to be elevated

in consideration of its strategic importance. EU agriculture should not be the bargaining chip in trade negotiations to the benefit of other sectors. We should also take into account the extraordinary sensitivity of the European agri-food sector to trade retaliation (i.e. from China) when the EU is involved in trade disputes with other countries or blocs

3. Ensuring fair trade which guarantees reciprocity in terms of production standards

is key and which prevents sustainability leakage, while ensuring transparency for consumers and not undermining strategic European sectors. If we face tighter restrictions on cultivation and higher production standards due to the EU framework we expect to be treated fairly at international level. As such, effective field and border controls are decisive (for example via strengthening Frontex or the European Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) to carry out spot checks). At the same time, depending on the third countries and building on internationally agreed standards, the EU should play an active international role in global trade ensuring market access with balanced trade agreements and enhancing cooperation with candidate and neighboring countries.

4. Any trade agreement needs to have effective and enforceable Trade and Sustainable Development chapter together with compulsory commitment from third countries to standards linked to animal welfare, the use of medicines in animal production, climate, chemical treatments and other international and EU standards on the environment in line

with WTO rules. **It is equally important not to accept an agreement with Mercosur** or any other agreement that disregards key concerns of farmers on the divergence of production standards and on the cumulative effects on sensitive sectors.

5. Further engagement with international partners in the World Trade Organization (WTO)

and other multilateral fora is crucial for the competitiveness of EU agriculture. The EU must use these platforms to further facilitate discussions on advancing sustainable agri-food trade, the establishment of fair-trade rules and worldwide standards, helping to ensure a level playing field for EU farmers and agri-cooperatives.

6. Champion the reduction of non-tariff barriers to trade and the uptake of technological solutions to reduce the administrative cost of trade.



Enlargement to new Member States: a balance to be found respecting EU producers

The farming community recognises that the **EU enlargement is linked to the prosperity and stability of Europe** and key for the global geopolitical context.

Any future enlargement should be managed in a way that minimises its impact on EU farmers and agri-cooperatives and which guarantees an adequate transition period with specific requirements to allow production and markets to adapt, thus preventing shocks.

Properly assessing the impacts that the accession of a further 9 Member States would have on agriculture is key. Furthermore, should Ukraine (and/or others) become a member of the EU and considering that it would lead to a significant increase of at least 30% of the EU's UAA (Utilised Agricultural Area), increased funding and adjustments, which take into account the average size of new Member States farms and the high degree of concentration of agricultural land in the country, will be required.

The temporary trade liberalisation measures for Ukraine started in June 2022, which were then extended in 2023 and 2024, resulted in a massive increase in Ukrainian agricultural products imports which severely impacted EU producers, especially in the cereals/oilseeds, poultry, egg, honey and sugar sectors. The situation has now simply become untenable for EU farmers and agri-cooperatives. A solution should be found that allows exports to continue, provided the pace and permitted volumes are manageable and can be absorbed by the European market without destabilising its producers. In that context, the decision of the Commission to reintroduce and revise the Association Agreement with Ukraine is key.

Actions are needed by the Commission to:

- Implement an efficient monitoring system providing a weekly update of the quantities imported for all agricultural products that is publicly accessible.
- Reintroduce the Association Agreement with Ukraine and if the trade is further liberalised, TRQs for agricultural products should be maintained as close as possible to the 2016 levels.
- Any further liberalisation of the Association Agreement for agricultural products should be made conditional to the implementation of EU production and labour standards.

OUR VISION: FAIR COMPETITIVENESS TOWARDS 2050 AND BEYOND



ABOUT COPA-COGECA

Copa and Cogeca, founded respectively in 1959 and 1958, form the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU.

Copa members represent leading farming unions at national level, speaking for millions of farmers across Europe. Cogeca members represent the interests of the thousands of agricultural cooperatives in Europe.

Our democratic organisations, led by elected representatives, embody the vibrant diversity of European agriculture across all 27 EU Member States.

We are the collective voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives of all sizes and specialisations dedicated to the daily production of crops, livestock or mixed farming, encompassing both conventional and organic practices.

Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe and contributing to reducing food insecurity globally.