October 2026 – Stockholm, SWEDEN

THE STOCKHOLM DECLARATION

Today is Europe's last chance
to rebuild its agriculture on solid ground

copa*cogeca
european farmers european agri-cooperatives

Preamble

We, the leaders of Europe's farming community, gathered in Stockholm for our 12th Congress, at a defining moment for Europe and for the future of its agriculture, are

PROUD
that European farmers and their agri-cooperatives produce high-quality food for all consumers in Europe and beyond; generating indispensable employment in rural areas and being the backbone of thriving rural communities;

AWARE
that Europe is facing profound geopolitical, economic and environmental challenges, from wars and trade tensions to climate shocks and extreme weather events;

CONCERNED
by the increasing pressure on the European agricultural sector from climate change, market volatility, rising input costs, unfair competition, geopolitical instability, regulatory complexity and demographic changes;

ALARMED
by the continued decline in the number of farms across Europe and the erosion of their financial resilience, with farmers increasingly struggling to maintain sufficient income and liquidity to invest, obtain a permit, adapt their holdings and remain in production;

CONSCIOUS
that food prices are an essential part of the cost-of-living debate with the latest Eurobarometer showing that inflation, rising prices and the cost of living are the top priorities for 47% of Europeans, six points higher than in autumn 2025;

MINDFUL
of to the latest Eurobarometer survey, in which 95% of Europeans consider agriculture and rural areas important for Europe's future alongside broad support for the CAP with 70% of Europeans believing that it benefits all Europeans, pointing overwhelmingly to its achievements in securing a stable supply of food in the EU at all times (93%), ensuring reasonable food prices for consumers and sustainable management of natural resources (92%);

CONVINCED
that agriculture and food production are strategic assets for Europe, contributing not only to food security but also to the competitiveness, territorial cohesion and autonomy of the European Union;

RECOGNISE
that production of food, feed, fuel and fibre is intrinsically linked to Europe's security, preparedness and defence, and that farmers and agri-cooperatives are essential actors in protecting Europe's territories, resources and capacity to withstand crises, while ensuring an affordable and reliable food supply for 450 million consumers in Europe and on global markets;

ACKNOWLEDGE
that farmers and their agri-cooperatives will be part of the solution in finding answers to the common challenges stemming from climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental protection;

DEPLORE
that the proposals for the future Multiannual Financial Framework and the Common Agricultural Policy risk weakening the resources, common character and predictability of European agricultural policy, going against the spirit of the EU's founding Treaties;

REGRET
the inadequate method pursued by the European Commission in proposing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post 2027 reform without proper consultation, with no policy options, and with no impact assessment;

RECALLING
the powerful mobilisation of 10.000 farmers and agri-cooperatives representatives from 27 EU Member States, who took to the streets of Brussels on 18th December 2025 with a common voice and message on all the above elements;

DETERMINED
to ensure that European agriculture remains a central pillar of Europe's future and that the CAP remains the key tool to deliver on its fundamental objectives, while preserving the integrity of the Single Market;

And therefore, call on the Heads of State and Governments of the European Union to make the right strategic choices for our common future and strengthen, not weaken, Europe's agricultural foundation.

1. Make farming a pillar of European security and defence

Europe is at a defining moment. The geopolitical environment is changing rapidly and food is increasingly recognised around the world as a fundamental asset. All major global powers are currently strengthening their agricultural sectors in the pursuit of collective food security, autonomy, increased sustainability and, ultimately, national security.

Europe cannot afford to be the only power moving backwards.

Farmers and agri-cooperatives are more than food, feed, fuel and fibre producers. They are custodians of Europe's rural territories and natural resources, and essential actors in maintaining the vitality of rural areas. Every crisis Europe has faced in recent years has highlighted the vital role farmers play – from ensuring food production during the COVID-19 pandemic, to contributing to renewable energy production following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or helping to prevent and fight wildfires.

Farmers and agri-cooperatives are Europe's first line of defence.

2. Secure a fit-for-purpose budget for a future-proof CAP

In the face of the mounting challenges facing our agricultural sector, if the Heads of State and Government of the European Union are to truly reflect its strategic importance, the CAP budget must be maintained at least at its current level and duly adjusted for inflation.

The 10% rural target and the resources linked to the mid-term review cannot and must not become a substitute for protecting the overall financial capacity of the CAP. These resources which were promised by means of two letters by the President of the European Commission must be allocated to the CAP, ring-fenced and therefore protected. They must remain available for agricultural policy and must not become subject to competing claims from other policy areas or to national and sectoral competition for funding.

Ring-fencing these resources is therefore necessary, but it is not sufficient: it cannot compensate for, or replace, an ambitious and adequately funded CAP. Europe needs a protected and future-proofed CAP, backed by sufficient financial means, capable of delivering on its Treaty objectives.

3. Keep the CAP genuinely Common

The commonality of the CAP is not an administrative detail; it is a fundamental condition for the functioning of the Single Market, a level playing field between European farmers and agri-cooperatives and the integrity of a truly European agricultural policy.

The CAP must remain genuinely Common. Europe cannot afford to lose the most important letter in the CAP: the "C" of Common.

The proposed governance model will create competition between Member States for agricultural resources and, at implementation level, competition between ministries, regions and stakeholders within Member States.

What is at stake today is nothing less than the progressive abandonment of one of the EU's historic policies and a strong political message of renationalisation and division.

4. Make agriculture a cornerstone of Europe's competitiveness and unlock functioning markets

European agriculture is a major economic asset, with the agri-food value chain generating more than €1 trillion in gross value added, being the world's largest exporter of agri-food products and supporting millions of jobs across Europe.

Agriculture must therefore be recognised as a strategic sector for Europe's competitiveness, resilience and security, and not treated as a marginal element of its strategic agenda.

Farmers, forest owners, fishers, cooperatives and their organisations need access to the instruments required to invest in innovation, digitalisation and AI, water resilience, infrastructure, decarbonisation, the bioeconomy and other solutions essential to the sector's transition and long-term resilience.

The European Competitiveness Fund can and should play an important role in supporting these investments, but such instruments must complement, not replace, a properly funded CAP.

Europe needs strong and functioning agricultural markets able to respond to shocks. A strong CAP therefore requires a strong Common Market Organisation (CMO), with Producer Organisations and cooperatives playing a central role in strengthening farmers' position in the food chain and building resilience. The future CMO should preserve these proven instruments and ensure adequate resources for operational programmes and crisis tools.

Simplification should not lead to a one-size-fits-all approach that weakens sector-specific instruments carefully designed to maximise their effectiveness.

5. Respect the diversity of European farming and simplify the CAP

The diversity of European agriculture, with its wide range of pedo-climatic conditions, farm structures, production systems, regions and economic realities, must be fully reflected in the design and implementation of the CAP. CAP support must remain available to all active farmers.

One-size-fits-all requirements are not appropriate for such a diverse farming sector. We therefore reject mandatory capping and degressivity.

At the same time, the CAP must be significantly simplified: conditionality and administrative requirements should be reduced. The Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle will only add more burden, complexity and legal uncertainty when agriculture is already subject to and makes a substantial contribution to environmental, climate and biodiversity objectives.

Rigid requirements should be replaced by practical, proportionate and, where appropriate, voluntary measures that are properly incentivised.

6. Give farmers and agri-cooperatives certainty to invest, produce and renew

Agriculture is a long-term business. Investments made today in farms and cooperative infrastructures - as for example processing, storage or distribution - will determine Europe's capacity to produce food and remain competitive in the next decades. Europe therefore needs continuity and predictability in its agricultural policy and funding including with transitional arrangements.

Farmers and agri-cooperatives can adapt to change. What they cannot adapt to is regulatory uncertainty.

Farmers and agri-cooperatives cannot make multiannual investments if the support on which they depend can be reshaped by annual budgetary decisions or competing national priorities.

On-farm and cooperative supported investments, must be clearly recognised as eligible beneficiaries of CAP support schemes given their key role in aggregating farmers, mobilising investments, strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of agricultural value chains and therefore should remain protected from the flexibility mechanisms of the new MFF.

European agriculture is about to face the greatest demographic transition in modern history. If we want to see young people enter farming and bring new approaches, we must, more than ever, give them a clear direction and a clear political vision for the future.

A European choice that will shape Europe's future

The decisions now being taken on the future MFF and CAP will shape Europe's ability to feed its citizens, sustain its rural territories and remain secure, competitive and resilient in an increasingly uncertain world. This is therefore not simply a debate about the architecture of the next EU budget.

It is a choice about the kind of Europe we want to build:

A EUROPE THAT SEEKS STRATEGIC AUTONOMY
must retain the capacity to feed itself and its 450 million consumers at affordable prices.

A EUROPE THAT SEEKS SECURITY AND DEFENCE
must maintain the agricultural capacity that underpins its collective food security and resilience of its territories.

A EUROPE THAT SEEKS RESILIENCE
must maintain vibrant rural communities and strong agricultural value chains.

A EUROPE THAT SEEKS COMPETITIVENESS
must invest in one of its largest strategic sectors.

European farmers and agricultural cooperatives are deeply rooted in the European project. We believe in the value of acting together, in the strength of the Single Market and in the capacity of common European policies to deliver for citizens.

This is the call of the millions of farmers and thousands of agri-cooperatives across Europe's rural areas to the Heads of State and Government of the European Union.

Your choices matter — for our future and for Europe's future.

THE CAP GROWS OUR DEFENCE,
LET'S DEFEND IT TOGETHER!

Copa and Cogeca, founded respectively in 1958 and 1959, 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 agricooperatives 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.