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Press Release

Copa & Cogeca underline that EU agriculture and forestry sectors part of the solution in tackling climate change but right policy must be in place to maximize potential

Copa & Cogeca underlined at a workshop today held in European Parliament that the EU agriculture and forestry sectors are part of the solution in tackling climate change, helping the EU to cut its greenhouse gas emissions, but the right policy must be in place to maximize their potential

Opening the event which was hosted by MEP Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Copa President Martin Merrild said “Europe is an important player on the world market and has a good sustainability record to be proud of, but we cannot close our eyes to future challenges. In order to continue our work and to keep contributing to European sustainable food, feed, and fibre production, we need to make sure that we have the right tools in place that do not hinder the further development of a sustainable farming sector. The Paris global climate deal stated that agriculture must adapt in a balanced way without putting food production at risk. This needs to be respected whilst cost-efficiency should not penalise early movers. This is why an increase in Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and LULUCF credits is needed”.

Mr Mario Guidi from Confagricoltura went on to talk on climate change adaptation and the need to look at the incoherence between the urgent need to avoid forest fires that burned 533 thousand hectares of forests in southern Europe in 2013 alone and the excessive legislative constraints and bureaucracy which prevent operators from sustainably managing their forests. If forests are managed sustainably, these fires which are sweeping across southern Europe can be avoided. Mr Guidi also underlined the need for coherence between the ambition of having a low-carbon future and the national bioeconomy strategies, and within those the crucial role of agriculture and forestry.

Liisa Pietola Chairwoman of Copa-Cogecas Environment Working Party underlined that agriculture and forestry are part of the solution in fighting climate change and that carbon sequestration and good soil management practices are key to achieving this. But she insisted that farmers need more carbon credits from LULUCF, which farmers provide by farming and managing forests, to counterbalance agricultural emissions in the Effort Sharing Regulation ESR. We must account both emissions and removals from agriculture and forestry”.

Chairman of the Forestry Working Party meanwhile explained how its widely accepted that forests are part of the solution due to implementation of the existing Sustainable Forest Management Principles which have been adopted by EU countries. Forest management can also have a positive effect in climate change mitigation, with bio-based products and renewable energy, but is also good for adapting to climate change, he added. He ended up by underlining that credits from forest management should be included in the enhanced LULUCF credits in order to inspire forest owners to continue their good work.

Wrapping up, Copa & Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said “Farmers are not only the first food producers, but they also sequester carbon in plants and soils. The investments made

in farms and forests, the applied research and innovation and the improvement of management must not be endangered. It is clear from what we heard today that we must ensure that there is adequate flexibility between the sectors included in the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and non-Emissions Trading Scheme (non-ETS) and LULUCF”.

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