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# Press Release

## **Copa and Cogeca urge EU Farm Ministers to get unjustified restrictions on EU exports of live pigs, pork and other pig products lifted and support actions to stop spread of African Swine Fever (ASF)**

Copa and Cogeca urged EU Farm Ministers in Brussels today to get unjustified restrictions on EU exports of live pigs, pork and other pig products lifted and supported their actions to stop the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF).

In a high-level meeting with Maltese Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights Roderick Galdes, Copa and Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said “We support Ministers actions to stop the spread of ASF in pigs and need collaborative actions to eradicate the disease also in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia”.

“But we have serious concerns about Ukraine’s refusal to accept our principle of regionalisation so that products are only banned in the region where ASF occurred. The EU is already treated as a single entity when it comes to imports and it also needs to be treated as a single entity when it comes to our exports. Ukraine wants better access to our markets but restricts our access to their market which I find difficult to accept. We need to push for further talks and actions to lift unjustified restrictions on our exports”, he insisted.

Underlining the need for a strong CAP and budget, with modern tools to help farmers face the increasing challenges facing them, Mr Pesonen gave the Minister Copa & Cogecas’ position paper on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Mr Pesonen highlighted the need as well for improved infrastructures and broadband access in rural areas to enable farmers and forest owners to profit from the digital revolution and smart farming. “Investments need to be in place to help their businesses perform”, he said. Like and Cogeca, the Minister highlighted the need for a strong CAP budget and to encourage farmers to join cooperatives to help them compete in increasing liberalised markets.

Finally, Mr Pesonen welcomed the agreement today and positive steps taken by Ministers vis a vis the proposed rules on the conservation of fishery resources and the protection of marine ecosystems, notably the much needed regionalisation of the decision-making process in fisheries through the multiannual management plans and the technical measures regulation, with a shift away from micro-management. But he had concerns about introducing some of the measures like unworkable mesh sizes, unclear definitions and unrealistic targets.

Copa and Cogeca also endorsed the Maltese MedFish4Ever Declaration and shared the objective of building much needed fish stocks in the Mediterranean.

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