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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca agree position on future of food and farming

Ahead of release of EU Commission proposals on the future EU budget and the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Copa and Cogeca call for a strong, competitive, market-oriented, more sustainable CAP based on simple, common rules across the EU. It must be backed up by a strong budget.

“Simplification is the number one priority. The next CAP must provide simpler rules and policy tools for farmers to use”, Copa President Joachim Rukwied underlined at a press event today.

“The Commission plans highlighted in the Communication are a good basis to work on. But we must guarantee that the CAP remains a truly common policy without any renationalisation that could endanger the functioning of the Single Market and lead to distortions of competition», added Rukwied..

« We are very worried about the increased level of subsidiarity in the Commission plans and mix of policy measures between the 1st and 2nd Pillar of the CAP”, he warned.

« For Copa and Cogeca, it is vital to keep both pillars of the CAP and keep direct payments to active farmers at current levels in the first pillar without any national co-financing. We welcome the increased focus on measures to help farmers cope with risks but these must remain voluntary to apply », he said.

The plan to merge the current greening and cross-compliance into a new enhanced conditionality will increase the conditions that farmers have to abide to and that, in Copa and Cogeca’s view, does not amount to simplification. The new architecture governing the environment and climate requirements under the plans also still raises more questions than answers. The implementation of the new delivery model must bring about simpler measures and requirements for farmers as well as streamlining the conditions for direct payments, controls and administrative requirements.

« It is positive to see that the need for a strong rural development pillar has been underlined to ensure the vitality of rural areas. The focus on smart farming, innovation and investments is very positive and it can bring positive developments to the sustainability and competitiveness of the sector. In order to benefit from this, the advisory and training services are important and need to be better adapted to farmer’s needs. Broad band access is vital to this process so that farmers and cooperatives can make use of new technologies and better promote their products », stressed Cogeca President Thomas Magnusson.

“Result-based schemes for biodiversity and potentially for soil, water and climate change mitigation under the 2nd pillar of the CAP must remain voluntary, complementary to the existing agri-environment schemes and easy to integrate into farming practices », added Magnusson.

“Copa and Cogeca cannot accept any cuts in the budget for agricultural expenditure. In particular, we call for the maintenance and stabilization of the CAP budget in real terms over the

next programming period. At a cost of less than 1% of EU governments total expenditure, the CAP budget still delivers good value for money for all citizens across the EU », Magnusson concluded.

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