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Press Release

International Women's Day – Rural Europe needs strong women farmer-entrepreneurs!

International Women's Day is the perfect opportunity to showcase the active contribution made by all women, from the countryside to the city. In an event hosted by MEPs Marijana Petir (EPP) and Maria Gabriela Zoana (S&D) at the European Parliament today, the Women's Committee of Copa called for better assessment of the challenges faced by women farmers and greater recognition of and support for the multiple ways in which they contribute to rural Europe.

In the EU, 96% of farms are family run, with women officially representing around 30% of the total EU farm managers. Yet women in agriculture play a much greater role than official statistics suggest. Several reports have pointed out the multi-functional role of women farmers in the local fabric of rural areas. The case studies presented in the Parliament today very much illustrated this, demonstrating the [social](#), [economic](#) and [educational](#) added value of women's farming projects.

However, for most participants in the event, rural women entrepreneurs also face specific obstacles when starting up farming and forestry activities. At the same time, they are suffering from a general decline in local public services. Presenting the outcome of a global study conducted to identify the key challenges women in agriculture face, Clara Serrano, EMEA Marketing Leader at Corteva Agriscience™, the Agriculture Division of DowDuPont, underlined that *"In Europe, 68% of women farmers think that gender discrimination is an issue in the agriculture industry. 67% of European women in agriculture participating in the survey think that the key area that would help remove the obstacles to equality is to raise the public's awareness of gender discrimination in farming and agriculture."*

MEP Marijana Petir, who dedicated an own-initiative report to this issue, considers that the *"Commission's proposals for the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy do not directly address the questions related to the specific needs of and support for women in agriculture. Thematic sub-programmes need to be kept in the future CAP to give Member States the possibility to encourage rural women communities and their projects."* MEP Petir also stands for the recognition of assisting spouses' "invisible work" and advocates for their social rights to be ensured.

In his closing remarks, Pekka Pesonen, Copa-Cogeca Secretary General, said, *"Through their engagement in local associations, municipal councils, farms and cooperatives, women are rural cornerstones. As shown by our [Innovation Award for Women Farmers](#), women farmers are creating and implementing a number of ground-breaking projects. We should be proud of this and we should widely promote such activities to inspire others and create new vocations. Generational renewal is a key challenge for the EU farming community. To overcome it, we need both more female and more male farmers in agriculture!"*

-ENDS-

Download the programme for “Strong rural women 4 strong rural Europe !” [HERE](#)
Translations (in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Polish) will be available soon www.copa-cogeca.eu

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