

30/09/2019

Press Release

New leadership for the European fruit and vegetable sector producers

Last week Copa and Cogeca's Working Party on Fruit and Vegetables elected as Chair and Vice Chair, Mr Luc Vanoirbeek, Secretary General of the Federation of Belgian Fruit and Vegetables Cooperatives (nominated by Boerenbond) and Mr Sergio Tondini from Alleanza delle Cooperative Italiane Agroalimentare.

Together they will be in charge of leading the works of the group in the times when fruit and vegetable sector is facing a high level of competition and requires constant innovation and investments to adapt to consumer demand and to remain economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. The sector needs to overcome significant challenges, including the imbalances of the food chain and increased competition on the internal EU market.



Due to this the newly elected working party leadership has outlined several key priorities for the sector in the upcoming period:

- Promotion of fruit and vegetable producers organisations in the EU, as a modern and effective tool of market management and ensuring a better functioning of the agri-food chain with the intention of fighting unfair trading practices (UTPs).
- Promotion of reciprocity in the EU trade relations, by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers to third countries.
- Promotion of adaptation and mitigation measures to fight climate change as fruit and vegetables producers are more and more exposed to extreme climatic conditions and its effects, especially in terms of pests and diseases and water scarcity.
- Ensuring that fruits and vegetables sector strategic importance for agriculture and for 500 million European consumers with regards to **food safety and public health** is recognised.

In Europe the fruits and vegetables sector accounts for 1.4 million farms and generates approximately 50 billion euros of turnover, that is, 21% of overall EU agricultural production and

accounts for 30% of agricultural employment in the EU. It is due to this strategic importance that the new leadership will focus in the upcoming period on sectors competitiveness, ensuring a higher level of sustainability and resilience and promoting the role of fruit and vegetables in the balanced diet of European citizens.

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