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Press Release

**Copa and Cogeca welcome the adoption in the Council of a Call for a Complementary Impact Assessment on the ‘SUR’ proposal**

**Copa and Cogeca support all the requests indicated in Article 1 of the adopted Council Decision and share the Council’s concerns regarding the lack of consideration given to the effects of the invasion of Ukraine and the current energy and food cost prices in the potential impact of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Sustainable Use of pesticide regulation (SUR) proposal on EU agriculture.**

Alongside the publication of proposals by the European Commission on 22nd June for a Nature Restoration Law and to halve the use of pesticides by 2030, Copa and Cogeca note the decision by the College of Commissioners to, “launch a comprehensive analysis on the drivers of food security in all their dimensions”. Such a decision is indeed relevant and signals how the proposals presented in June could have consequences on food security which merit further comprehensive analysis.

Copa Vice-President Pedro Gallardo added, *“In light of the current circumstances (war in Ukraine, EU’s dependency on external agricultural inputs (i.e., energy and fertilisers) and soaring food prices in many countries), it is crucial that agricultural yields remain stable to produce enough high-quality and affordable products. For many years, society has been taking food security and affordability for granted and the global impacts of this have also become a concern in the EU as the latest data on annual inflation demonstrates. Copa and Cogeca has always given an unequivocal support to the aforementioned calls for a complementary impact assessment to investigate whether the SUR proposal would be feasible in the timeline proposed by the Commission. We have also encouraged the Commission to develop a method to consider what has already been done in terms of on-farm innovation and IPM just as they have done for measuring and establishing targets.”*

Copa and Cogeca recognise the actions taken by the Commission to use all available EU land together with a range of short-term measures to support farmers and maintain affordability for citizens, however the reality facing the EU and the wider world has changed since December 2019 (EU Green Deal) and May 2020 (Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategy).

In the current politically precarious situation, Copa and Cogeca feel the EU should focus more than ever on the goal of ensuring food security instead of acting at the expense of our production. For example, the various studies published over the past two years (JRC[[1]](#footnote-1), Wageningen, USDA[[2]](#footnote-2), COCERAL, Euroseeds, University of Kiel[[3]](#footnote-3), INRAE, HFFA[[4]](#footnote-4)) all point in a worrying direction: agricultural production in the EU will sharply decline, prices and farmers' incomes will be severely affected, and environmental benefits will be very limited in terms of food security and sustainability due to offshoring effects to third countries.

Furthermore, the EU's dependence on food imports will increase dramatically and some studies predict that the EU will become a net importer. As such, it is important for the Commission to take the current socio-political situation into account before applying any policy that would deal a severe blow to EU agricultural production. Moreover, legislators should properly evaluate what EU farmers have already delivered up until now regarding the sustainable use of pesticides. In Europe, pesticide use, and risk have decreased sharply over the past five decades[[5]](#footnote-5).

Food security is highly strategic and still very relevant; thus, the EU Green Deal cannot be implemented at the expense of EU production. The EU institutions must speed up all the work being done to provide EU agriculture with the tools it needs to achieve those objectives while not reducing our production; transitions must be placed together with farmers on the ground as well as a continued dialogue between farmers and the EU institutions.

**-END-**

Translation in DE, FR, ES, IT, PL, and RO will soon be available on the Copa-Cogeca website.

For further information, please contact

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| Paula de Vera  Senior Policy Advisor  Paula.deVera@copa-cogeca.eu | Jean-Baptiste Boucher  Communications Director  +32 474 840 836  Jean-Baptiste.Boucher@copa-cogeca.eu |

1. https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121368 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.fas.usda.gov/newsroom/economic-and-food-security-impacts-eu-farm-fork-strategy [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://grain-club.de/fileadmin/user\_upload/Dokumente/Farm\_to\_fork\_Studie\_Executive\_Summary\_EN.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://hffa-research.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/HFFA-Research-The-socio-economic-and-environmental-values-of-plant-breeding-in-the-EU.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. EEA (2018), Phillips McDougall (2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)