

5/10/10

## **Press Release**

### **COPA-COGECA 2010 CONGRESS OF EUROPEAN FARMERS CALLS FOR A ROBUST CAP POST-2013**

In its 2010 Congress of European Farmers held in Brussels today, Copa-Cogeca urged the EU to ensure there is a competitive EU agri-food sector and a robust Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2013, focusing on the economic role of EU farmers in providing food and services. Faced with declining EU farm incomes, big improvements must be made to the functioning of the EU food chain, to ensure a better return from the market for EU farmers and their cooperatives.

Speaking at Copa-Cogecas' Congress, Copa- President Padraig Walshe warned "EU farm incomes plummeted by nearly 12% last year and they are already on average less than 50% of average earnings in the EU. Yet FAO expects world food demand to more than double by 2050. On top of this, the EU Trade Commissioner is really pushing for a trade liberalising deal with the Latin American Trading bloc Mercosur that would have a devastating impact on beef, poultry, pigmeat, ethanol and the fruit and vegetable sectors in Europe. This would threaten over 28 million jobs in EU rural areas. It would also jeopardise the EU's high food safety standards, since imports do not have to comply with the same conditions. To ensure safe, secure food supplies for 500 million EU consumers, the future CAP must focus on the economic role of entrepreneurial farmers in producing food".

"The EU Commission must consequently ensure that all tools are available to manage the market properly and that direct payments to active farmers continue. Sufficient, common funds must be made available to finance a strong CAP. Without adequate support, EU agricultural production will fall further, causing a sharp rise in food prices for consumers. The CAP budget only represents 0.4% of GDP. Without the CAP, consumers will become dependent on food imports with no control over how they are produced, the price or availability".

Cogeca President Paolo Bruni stressed "Major improvements must also be made to ensure a better functioning food chain. There is currently a big imbalance in power, with cooperatives up against the huge buying power of a handful of supermarkets. Farmers and their cooperatives must get a fairer share of the retail price. The farmers' position in the food chain must be reinforced which could be achieved by concentrating supply via cooperatives and producer organisations. EU competition rules should be adjusted to enable cooperatives to grow in size and scale, giving them more power and contributing to a rebalanced food chain. There also needs to be fairer contractual relations".

During the Congress, participants debated policy options for the future of the EU agriculture sector. Copa-Cogecas' requests for a competitive EU agri-food sector and a strong CAP were supported by many high level speakers at the event.

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