



Copa and Cogeca: promoting and defending the interests of the farming community in the EU

32nd Session of the Assembly of the Regional Rural Development SWG in the South Eastern Europe

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Who are Copa and Cogeca?

Two organisations....

Copa

Created in 1958, Copa represents 23 million European farmers and family members.

Cogeca

Created in 1959, Cogeca represents 22, 000 European agricultural cooperatives.

Copa and Cogeca

In 1962, a joint Secretariat was created, making it one of the biggest and most active lobby organisations in Brussels

How is Copa and Cogeca organised?

Joint Copa and Cogeca Secretariat

- **50 staff** in the Brussels office operating in 6 working languages (EN, FR, ES, DE, IT, PL) and representing **66 Member organisations** and **34 Partner Organisations**

4 Teams: Secretary-General's Team
Commodities and Trade
General Affairs
Administration

How is Copa and Cogeca organised?

The Working Parties

- 47 Working Parties, dealing with market and policy developments
- Prepare joint Copa and Cogeca positions
- Topics: commodities, cooperative affairs, direct payments, **rural development**, biotechnology, environment, animal health & welfare ...



How is Copa and Cogeca organised?

The Praesidium

- Composed of the Presidents of the Member Organisations (66)
- Copa and Cogeca each have a Praesidium, Presidency and a President:



Albert Jan Maat (NL)
Current Copa President



Christian Pès (FR)
Current Cogeca President

How does Copa and Cogeca lobby the EU Commission?

- Contacts with the European Commissioners and participation of Commissioners in Copa-Cogeca Praesidium meetings (e.g. President Juncker, Commissioner Phil Hogan)
- Regular meetings with Cabinet members
- Contact with Directorates-General and Units
- Active contribution and participation in the Civil Dialogue Groups
- Organisation of high-level events, seminars, conferences

How does Copa and Cogeca lobby the European Parliament?

- Close contacts with the Committee on Agriculture and other Committees at the European Parliament
- Participation in public hearings, events
- Regular contacts with MEPs



European Parliament

How does Copa and Cogeca lobby the EU Council ?

- Before every Council meeting: Copa and Cogeca Presidents meet with the president-in-office of the Agricultural Council
- Official letters, positions, meetings, seminars, events



Promoting and defending farmers and agri-cooperatives interest

The importance of the EU agriculture sector for the economy

- EU-28 agricultural production is worth over 400 billion €
- EU agricultural sector employs almost 26 million people
- EU agriculture provides quality food for 500 million European consumers and at the same time maintains the environment and biodiversity
- The EU is the World's number one exporter of agricultural and food-products, representing three quarters of the EU net-trade balance

Promoting and defending farmers and agri-cooperatives interest

Key challenges faced by the EU agriculture sector:

- Increasing production costs and extreme price volatility
- Barriers to trade that can cause additional imbalance in the EU agri-food chain
- The risk of more red tape in the implementation of the new CAP
- Climate change and increasing risk of extreme weather events
- Generational renewal – attracting young people in the rural areas

Maintaining agricultural production and up- and down- stream food supply chain in rural areas is of paramount importance

Promoting and defending farmers and agri-cooperatives interest

Opportunities for EU farmers and cooperatives in the new programming period

- New Rural development policy focus on jobs and growth, on increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector through investments

Three objectives to be achieved:

1. Viable food production
 2. Sustainable management of natural resources and climate action
 3. Balanced territorial development
- Horizon 2020 – 7 years EU research programme – 80 billions for an Innovation Europe – new tools such as **multi-actors projects**

How to enhance the role of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the new Rural development policy?

€4.2 billion for rural development to be invested in the countryside

Six priorities:

1. Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation
2. Enhancing competitiveness
3. Promoting food chain organisation and risk management
4. Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems
5. Promoting resource efficiency
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development

How to enhance the role of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the implementation of the new RD measures?

Copa and Cogeca promote the appropriate use of rural development measures to unlock the opportunities for the agriculture and forestry sector

- **Knowledge transfer** – a more practical approach demonstration activities, farm management exchange and farm visits
- **New toolkit for risk management** – increase support for farmers that are expose to increasing economic and environmental risks
- Setting up of **producers** groups and **organisations** (whenever necessary) and **enhance the existing ones**

How to enhance the role of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the implementation of the new RD measures?

- **Create operational groups** under EIP Agri – strengthen the work between various actors along the value chain and bring research close to practice
- **Invest in new technologies that focus on resource efficiency and circular economy** – energy and nutrient use efficiency, precision farming
- Invest in logistics and infrastructure for a sustainable mobilisation of renewable raw materials
- Promote **local products and services** ex. on-farm sales, nature and agro- tourism
- **Diversify the activities at the farm and cooperative level-Start-up aid and investment support** for development of non-agricultural activities

What is next to ensure a successful implementation of the new Rural Development policy

Key messages:

- The approval of the remaining RD programmes need to be done as soon as possible (May -June 2015) in order not to further delay the implementation
- Farmers associations and agri-cooperatives are the most important partners in the process of monitoring and evaluation of RD policy and through the whole process
- Copa and Cogeca promote a permanent exchange of views on the implementation of the RDP and communicate the results to the Commission
- Copa and Cogeca make sure that simplification is a priority also in the context of the RD



Thank you for your attention!