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Press Release

Exceptional heatwave impact on agriculture: Copa and Cogeca present initial assessment to Commissioner Hansen and call for action

This morning, Copa and Cogeca leaders from the countries most affected by this summer's heatwaves took part in a meeting organised by European Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Christophe Hansen and Minister Martin Heydon for the Irish presidency. This meeting primarily aimed to take stock of the situation and gather first-hand information ahead of the upcoming meeting of EU Agriculture Ministers in Dublin, where the issue will be added to the agenda. Supporting this initiative, Copa and Cogeca took that opportunity to call for a response commensurate with the scale of the crisis in the short, medium and long term.

Representatives from Copa and Cogeca directly reported to Commissioner Hansen on the EU widespread deterioration in agricultural conditions in the wake of the extreme weather events that have hit Europe this summer. The feedback received from Copa and Cogeca members show that while impacts vary between countries and regions, Southern, Central and Western Europe have been most severely affected, with Slovenia, Austria, France and Italy among the countries reporting the most severe consequences. Significant regional damage has also been reported in Spain, Hungary, Germany, Croatia, Czechia, Ireland and Romania.

Arable crops have been particularly affected, with cereals, maize and oilseeds among the hardest-hit commodities. Maize losses have reached 50–70% in Slovenia, around 40% in France and 20–25% in Italy, with losses of up to 70% in some non-irrigated areas. Potatoes, sugar beets and vegetables have also suffered significant losses, particularly where irrigation is unavailable or insufficient.

Permanent crops have also been severely affected. Fruit, grapes and olives have suffered from heat stress, sunburn, fruit drop and reduced size and quality, with particularly serious impacts reported in Croatia, Italy, Slovenia and Spain. In Croatia, fruit and grape production is estimated to be around 30% lower, while more than 90% of olive groves reportedly lack irrigation.



Livestock production is also coming under increasing pressure. Reduced grassland and forage availability has sharply cut hay and pasture production, with losses reaching at least 50% in Hungary and 30–90% in affected areas of Germany. France, Slovenia, Spain, Italy and Ireland are also reporting significant feed shortages. Milk production has already declined by between 10% and 15% in some areas, while animal welfare, fertility and herd sizes are also being affected. The need to purchase supplementary feed is increasing production costs and raising concerns about feed security over the coming winter.

The crisis, coming on top of the input crisis and the sharp increases in fertiliser and energy costs, is therefore no longer simply a question of this summer's harvest. It poses a risk for the economy, production and food-security, as well and an inflation risk that will extend into the months ahead.

The responses to the crisis remain limited and largely national or regional, focusing on state aid, insurance, water management and irrigation. Copa and Cogeca leaders consider these measures insufficient given the European scale and geographical spread of the impacts. They advocate for a strong EU response in the short, medium and long term, with immediate cash flow relief, more flexible use of CAP instruments, stronger EU-level coordination and greater investment in climate adaptation, including resilient varieties, water management, irrigation infrastructure and improved risk-management tools.

In the medium term, Europe must address the structural constraints limiting farmers' ability to adapt. This should include action on the Nitrates Directives, the suspension of CBAM, and a Food and Feed Omnibus that delivers workable solutions, including access to effective plant protection products.

Looking further ahead, this summer has made clear that extreme weather events are no longer exceptional. They are now affecting all of Europe across all seasons. European agriculture needs a clear long-term policy direction and sufficient financial resources to build resilience. The future CAP, and CMO together with the European Competitiveness Fund, must provide the investment capacity needed for adaptation, innovation, water management and risk management.

Farmers and their cooperatives are not only producing food and safeguarding food security. They are also managing our land, maintaining rural areas and, as the fight against forest fires this summer has demonstrated, contributing directly to the protection of our communities.

We therefore need both an immediate European response to this crisis and a clear long-term strategy to make European agriculture more resilient. Copa and Cogeca stand ready to work with Commissioner Hansen, the European Commission, Member States and the European Parliament to ensure that the lessons of this summer translate into concrete action. Europe cannot afford to wait for the next crisis before investing in the resilience of its agriculture.

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

About us - Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, while guaranteeing food security for 500 million people throughout Europe. >>> More information www.copa-cogeca.eu

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