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***COPA-COGECA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC  
CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE "EU 2020"  
STRATEGY***

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# ***COPA-COGECA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE "EU 2020" STRATEGY***

## **Introduction**

The Commission Working Document *Consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy* has been designed to serve as a successor to the current Lisbon Strategy. European farmers and European agri-cooperatives wish to highlight the very positive role which a vibrant, economically viable and sustainable agri-food sector can play in achieving the three priorities which the Commission proposes should be the key drivers for 2020: *creating value by basing growth on knowledge, empowering people in inclusive societies and creating a competitive, connected and greener economy.*

## **General**

Today EU support to agriculture represents 0.4% of GDP while the contribution of agriculture to EU economy represent 3.4% of GDP.

Furthermore, the cost of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must be weighed against the huge benefits it brings.

The CAP provides European society with a multifunctional and vibrant form of agriculture which provides food security for over 500 million citizens and has a world-wide reputation for quality foods whilst respecting animal welfare, the environment and maintaining the pleasant landscape that Europeans expect.

Agriculture is also a huge source of employment with nearly 30 million people with jobs, working either part-time or full-time on farms in the EU. In addition, more than 10 million people work in cooperatives or related sectors which supply farmers with inputs or process and distribute their produce. This means that one in six jobs in the EU depends upon agricultural production and its competitiveness.

EU agriculture can also make an important contribution to both reducing emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxide) as well as the EU's dependence on energy imports through the production of renewable non-food resources

The agricultural sector can therefore have a considerable impact in achieving the proposed priorities in the EU 2020 that focus on jobs and creating a competitive, connected and greener economy.

In sum the EU gains enormous value from its support to agriculture. But, with a strong CAP it can do more in the future.

## **Environment: tackling climate change**

The projected climate changes in the coming years will have an impact on crop yields, livestock management and location of production, threatening farm incomes and causing land abandonment in some parts of Europe and the world. Agriculture can make a positive contribution to the fight against climate change and is definitely part of the solution.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the EU-27 agriculture sector, including livestock, have fallen by as much as 20% over the period 1990 to 2007 (assessment of the European Environment Agency), largely through the reforms of the CAP, combined with a more efficient use of fertilisers and manures as well as farmers' progressive implementation of agricultural and environmental initiatives. In order to further reduce these emissions, substantial investment in agriculture research and development is needed to enable farmers to produce food more efficiently with less impact. In addition, the provision of advice and vocational training are key to improving farmers' and forest producers' adaptive capacity and to facilitating access to tools to foster the mitigation potential of their activities.

Agriculture and forestry can deliver both adaptation and mitigation solutions in synergy

The unique role of the agricultural and forest sector in being able to reduce GHG emissions whilst adapting their own businesses and facilitating societal adaptation to climate change. In addition, the implementation of mitigation measures in agriculture and forestry can further decrease GHG emissions whilst production remains stable or even increases. In many cases, by their very nature, mitigation and adaptation in agriculture and forestry are interlinked by simultaneously addressing both challenges.

Whilst the CAP is not a European climate change policy it can, in combination with other measures, offer a framework for effective policy support and the tools and incentives required to address climate change at the same time as ensuring a competitive agriculture and meeting growing world food demand.

### **Research**

Research will also play a crucial role. The strategic agenda for research in agriculture and related areas must link to the main objectives of a CAP. The worldwide increase of food demand makes it necessary to use the full potential of European agriculture. This is only possible with an adequate financial support for research, targeting new technologies and innovative solutions, to further increase productivity and improve yield stability. In many cases the needed technologies already exist for industrial purposes, but their adaptation to the agricultural needs, the transfer of knowledge to the practitioner and the necessary applied research to boost their use are yet missing.

It is also important to further develop trans- and inter-sector research to be able to align agricultural production with societies expectations in a cost-effective way. This is especially crucial in research linking natural and economic sciences as farmers are the key actors for delivering public goods (mainly environmental, but also social and ethical). Generic research must be supported as well in order to have a better understanding of the interdependencies between farming activities and their impact on water, soil etc..

European farmers and European agri-cooperatives need to have an access to new technologies to remain competitive, to achieve the highest standards in term of food safety and also to contribute to the reduction of the use of carbon in its process of production.

### **Strengthening the CAP**

The EU agricultural sector can make a very significant contribution to meeting the priorities laid down by the Commission but, to achieve it will require a strong CAP.

Copa and Cogeca firmly believe that only an EU-financed CAP can boost a multifunctional form of agriculture that contributes to creating a greener economy, in which a "more efficient use of resources, including energy, and the application of new greener technologies will stimulate growth, create new jobs and services and help the EU both to maintain a strong manufacturing base and a vibrant services sector and to meet its environment and climate goals".