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Subject: COPA COGECA report

Dear all,

On Thursday, EVP addressed 70 Presidents of the national farming organisations associated in COPA COGECA. In his opening speech, EVP made a point that the European farming system and the CAP need a change - this was obvious even before the Commission came with the Green Deal. He pointed out that if we stick to the business as usual, European farmers will not end up with business as usual. The added value of EGD is that it comes with a plan to deliver this change, it's a new economic model. EVP pointed out that EGD will be successful (in the context of agriculture) if it delivers on three points 1/ it ensures income for farmers (EVP pointed out that farmers' incomes are below other sectors while we have the CAP and while the economic benefits are limited to a smaller number of farmers and landowners) 2/ it protects farmers and consumers from food that is too cheap and produced by unsustainable methods. He referred to the chlorinated chickens, as an example.

3/ it ensures that food is produced only in sustainable ways.

He challenged the Presidents to look for opportunities in the forthcoming Commission strategies. In that context, he highlighted the role of ecoschemes and the discussion on ring fencing a part of the direct payment budget to them.

While the reception (and Twitter feedback) was very positive and constructive (EVP stayed almost an hour and a half, compared to the scheduled 45 minutes), several Presidents criticised the Mercosur agreement. Many of them also pointed out that the ambition of the EGD is too high (pesticides were mentioned) and will drive farmers out of business.

EVP pointed out that we must find a balance between biodiversity and sustainability and underlined the need to work with evidence. He reiterated that there is a serious problem with income support from Pillar I because it works only for some farmers. He also recalled that greening of CAP has been a disappointment and we will need to be very clear on what we want from ecoschemes. He also noted that we should consider labels on origin and sustainable forestry. This is important for consumers' choices. EVP also pointed out that cities cannot survive without thriving rural areas.

All the best,

Lukas

[redacted]