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Press Release

COPA-COGECA SUPPORTS MEMBER STATES OPPOSITION TO RE-OPENING OF TRADE TALKS WITH MERCOSUR

Copa-Cogeca backed today the EU Member States who have opposed the re-opening of trade talks with Mercosur, the Latin American trading group, warning the move will severely undermine the EU's high standards.

In a meeting with the EU Farm Council President Elena Espinosa, Copa President Padraig Walshe said "I welcome the decision by these countries who said the resumption of talks with the Latin American trading bloc sent a "highly negative signal" to Europe's struggling farm sector. The move will endanger the EU's high quality and safety standards. EU producers have to comply with stringent requirements, which make it much more costly to produce, whilst Mercosur countries do not have to respect the same standards. They use growth promoters in their meat production even though they are banned in the EU. They have poor antibiotic controls. Their labour conditions are unacceptable by EU standards. They also produce with the benefit of G.M. technology, which is denied European farmers because we are told EU consumers do not want it. Other trade partners, such as the US and Japan, do not allow meat imports from Mercosur countries."

"The EU farm sector is already on its knees, with farmers' income below pre-2000 levels in many member states. They plummeted by another 12% last year. Any further pressure on their incomes would be unbearable, causing an exodus from the sector and from the rural areas of the EU"

Cogeca President Paolo Bruni stressed "Copa-Cogeca finds the EU Commissions proposal to re-launch the trade talks totally unacceptable. A bilateral trade agreement with Mercosur will cause a sharp rise in beef, poultry, wheat, citrus fruit/juice imports to the EU from these countries. It will also cause more intensive farming methods and de-forestation in Mercosur countries, as shown by an EU impact assessment report. We consequently urge EU Ministers to ensure that the negotiations do not go ahead. We also emphasised this in a letter sent to Ms Espinosa and to all EU Agriculture Ministers".

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