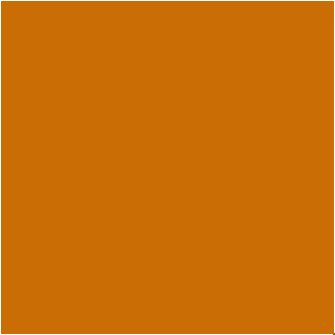




“Representing farmers’ interests: policies and institutions in Europe”

by Mr. Ruud Schers, Policy Coordinator Copa-Cogeca

Conference on Policies and Programmes to Support Small Farmers
Organisations in Georgia
Tbilisi 21-22 March 2012

Content of presentation

- Representing farmers' interests in Europe
- Who are Copa and Cogeca?
- Copa-Cogeca activities in the EU
- How does Copa-Cogeca work for farmers?
- Agricultural cooperatives in the EU
- Copa-Cogeca cooperation with farmers' organisations in Third countries
- Farmers interest representation at World level
- Conclusions

Representing farmers' interests in Europe

- Farmer's organisations (regional, national and sectoral)
- Influencing agricultural policies
- Contacts and relations with regional and national governments
- Differences (cultural, historical, political) between countries (Western-Europe and Eastern-Europe)

Who are Copa and Cogeca?

Copa – European farmers

Bringing together 56 national farmers' organisations

Cogeca – European agri-cooperatives

Bringing together 31 national agricultural cooperative organisations

- 1958 Creation of Copa (six countries)
 - 1959 Creation of Cogeca
 - 1962 Joint Secretariat
-
- Representing 13 million farmers + their families
 - As well as around 38,000 cooperatives

Copa-Cogeca activities in the EU

Copa-Cogeca's mission

- Defending and promoting the general interests of agriculture
- Maintaining and developing relations with EU Institutions as well as with representative organisations at EU level
- Finding solutions that are in the common interest

Current activities (main)

- Common Agricultural Policy reform
- Trade issues
- Situation on the markets

How does Copa-Cogeca work for farmers?

- Involvement of farmers in Working Parties (as experts)
- Common position for EU farmers (strong voice)
- Involvement of farmers representatives in lobbying
- Lobbying:
 - a. Identifying and following policy areas
 - b. throughout the legislative process
 - c. urgent issues (*ad-hoc*)
 - d. implementation

Agricultural cooperatives in the EU

- History of cooperatives in Europe (19th century)
- Farmers' involvement in cooperatives:
 - a. Voluntary approach
 - b. Initiative
 - c. Ownership
 - d. Business orientation
- Developments in the past 50 years
- Current role and position of cooperatives and other producer organisations
- Cooperatives: legislation, taxation and competition policies

Copa-Cogeca cooperation with farmers' organisations in Third countries

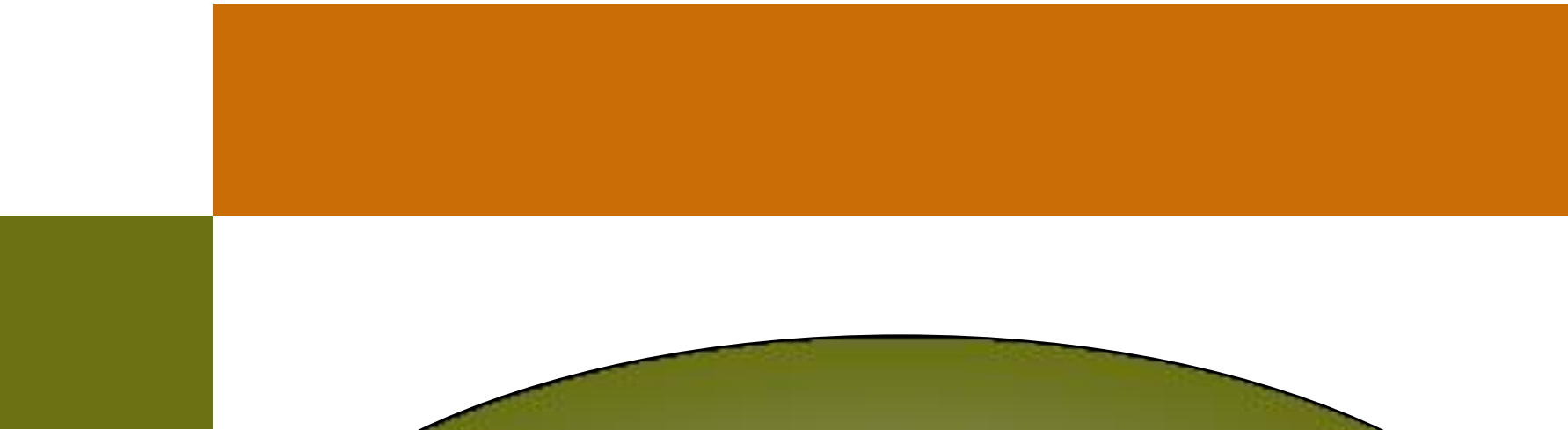
- Copa-Cogeca members from EU Member States
- Copa-Cogeca partnerships with other European countries (non-EU Member States)
- Currently contacts with: Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Croatia, Turkey, Serbia, Ukraine.
- Partnership agreements possible with farming organisations from other regions, such as Caucasus and Balkan.

Farmers interest representation at world level

- Setting-up of World Farmers' Organisation in 2011
- Interest representation with UN, FAO, WTO, OIE and other international *fora*
- Core areas: food security, farmers' position in the food chain, climate change.
- Consists of national farming organisations

Conclusions

- Importance of having farmers structured in farming organisations for interest representation/lobbying
- Identify common issues
- Strong common voice at national level
- Strong voice and alliances when grouped together at international level
- Develop contacts with neighbouring countries, the EU and other like-minded countries.



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