

[illegible]

Yesterday, I attended a meeting of the tobacco group at COPA-COGECA.

Sector representatives of most producing MS (PL, HU, EL, IT, ES) took the floor to describe the situation in the respective countries. Most of them underlined the critical decrease of production due mainly to the fact that the price paid does not cover production costs. Only ES outlined better conditions, thanks to the agri-environmental support granted by the Gvmt. All expressed concern about the reformed CAP and asked for the sector to be treated at least as any other agricultural products. They also asked to resume the Tobacco CDG as an occasion for all stakeholders to meet and discuss internal strategies and to inform the COM of their concerns.

I replied explaining that the tobacco sector is indeed treated as other agricultural sectors but for the fact that, for obvious health-policy reasons, there is no way that the COM will propose to revert to a past where specific, coupled support was paid. Nonetheless, tobacco is still eligible for direct, decoupled payments and for RD measures and underlined that the ES initiative to pay AEM support is a good example of what can be done. I also explained the current state of play of the CAP Reform and said that in the future it will be up to MS to identify priorities in the national agri policy and to reflect them in the national strategic plans. I also announced that DG AGRI decided to hold a Tobacco CDG on 22 April 2020.

The audience thanked and committed to regularly notify the COM with market developments and of any other useful information.

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