BTO 8/02/2023- Meeting between Copa-Cogeca and SANTE CAB on the Framework on Sustainable Food Systems (FSFS)

Participants
- Copa-Cogeca:
- SANTE CAB: Annukka Ojala
- SANTE E1:

Meeting held at the request of Coca Cogeca to discuss the FSFS initiative.

Copa Cogeca:
- Welcomes the proposal and stresses the importance of all three dimensions of sustainability
- Highlights the need to define food sustainability so that this definition can be used to harmonise actions around it (for instance in revision of subsequent food policies)
- Asks for a dedicated budget to support farmers in the transition as the CAP is not enough according to Copa Cogeca: initial investments costs supported by farmers are not covered by the market
- Asks that progress rather than fixed targets are rewarded in the FSFS
- Requests the possibility for sustainable agricultural practices other than organic to be also recognised in the FSFS
- Mentions the importance to ensure a fair distribution of costs and benefits among all actors of the food chain and asks for this principle to be enshrined in the FSFS
- Is worried about the option establishing minimum requirements through delegated acts as it could lead – in Copa Cogeca’s opinion – to duplications and contradictions
- Is concerned that the minimum requirements may be established following a “one size fits all” approach, which will not enable to take into account differences even within same sectors (e.g. extensive beef producer in France can make a different contribution to sustainability than intensive beef producer in the North of Italy)
- Stresses that minimum requirements should apply to imported products as well to avoid cheap imports produced with lower sustainability standards in third countries
- Is worried about the green claims proposal and the methodology that might be used there (is afraid that the same methodology will be used for the environmental part of the future sustainability label)

SANTE:
- Stresses that the FSFS should be seen as an opportunity and that the cost of inaction is too high, including for farmers
- Explains the rationale behind the minimum requirements, the functioning of the different options with the possibilities for consultations of stakeholders and the impact assessments foreseen in each of them, and the interplay with the pull measures (labelling and procurement)
- Indicates that the COM governance on the initiative (4 co-lead DGs on the file, ISG regularly informed and convened) is aimed at avoiding duplications and contradictions between the future FSFS and sectorial legislations
- Mentions the governance mechanisms foreseen in the FSFS and the role that MS could play in areas where the EU has no competence (e.g. taxation, education)
- Indicates that the CAP is the main financial instrument foreseen to support farmers in the transition and that the FSFS will guide the next revision of the CAP
- Explains that, if a harmonised EU sustainability label is created, this would take place in two steps
- Recalls the conclusions of the report “Application of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural and agri-food products” published in June 2022 and indicates that the COM is working on several fronts to promote sustainability at global level (at multilateral fora, but also within bilateral agreements)