Commissioner Wojciechowski meeting with representatives of COPA-COGECA, AVEC, CEPM, CIBÉ and EUWEP on 10 January

Participants:
- Associations representing farmers and producers from the sugar, cereals/oilseeds, poultry meat and eggs:
- Commissioner’s Cabinet: A. Langer, K. Ochmanski
- DG AGRI:

The Commissioner introduced the topic and reminded about the context, emphasising on Russia gaining on two fronts – eliminating Ukraine on the international grains markets and creating a destabilisation on the EU markets by the increased influx of UA imports.

COPA/COGECA, while expressing full solidarity with UA society, called for a common EU action to alleviate to some of the consequences of this terrible war. He emphasised that not finding the solution would be detrimental to the EU and its institutions, even might become an existential issue for the EU. He referred to the need to introduce quantitative limits for some sensitive products (there seems to be a consensus for poultry, eggs, and sugar). Furthermore, he underlined an unanimous position with the five other associations on finding an EU wide solution on green lines, facilitate UA exports to third countries and ensure that the EU market is not disturbed in terms of its production, prices and standards.

On poultry: AVEC thanked the Commissioner support to find a solution to this complex problem. They underlined that an acknowledgement of the concern by the whole Commission is needed.

On sugar: CIBÉ mentioned that 1) 90% of UA sugar beet production are managed by factories, very few independent producers; 2) the EU sugar producers need to decide now about the planting area but it very much depends on the level of UA imports – 20 vs 400 vs 700 thousand tons, 3) high world prices have masked the problems of sugar producers so far.

On maize: problem and growing discontent spreading in Western Europe, very low maize prices.

On the solution of supporting UA in additional transport costs to facilitate transit of their agri-food products (as explained by the Commissioner) highlighted that the EU is a lucrative market for the UA producers. However, it remains in the interest of UA to maintain its traditional export outlets. It is also a geopolitical interest for the EU as currently Russia boosts their cereals exports to North Africa.
It is also valid in the context of future EU enlargement as the EU won’t be able to absorb all the UA volumes.

On Russia’s imports, mentioned a meeting in LV, where the plea was made to support LV in blocking transit of RU agri-food products via LV ports, however COPA-COGECA couldn’t support that as it goes against the EU sanctions policy that food cannot become the weapon.

Mr Langer outlined the next steps in regard to a potential new regulation in place after the current one expires in June this year. He underlined that no agreement has been reached between services and the discussions will continue at theCssrs’ level.