

CC(19)10282:1 – [REDACTED]

Mr Jerzy Bodgan Flewa
Director-General
DG AGRI
European Commission
Building L130
BE-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 22nd November 2019

Re: DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups re-organisation

Dear Director-General, [REDACTED]

I am writing to you regarding the functioning of the DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs). I would like to reiterate that Copa and Cogeca members highly appreciate the work that your Directorate-General is doing in managing the CDG system.

We consider crucial that the EU institutions, in particular DG AGRI, meet with the farming sector representatives that depend on the relevant EU policies that you are working on in order to contribute to the success of EU policies. Listening to Member States experts in various sectors brings EU policy work closer to farmers and agri-cooperatives who are directly affected by EU decision-making.

Nevertheless, we are still particularly concerned of some re-organisation, or even abolition of several sub-groups within the CDGs like the one on tobacco, flowers and ornamental plants or hops, that took place recently.

In particular, your services indicated few weeks ago to Copa-Cogeca Secretariat that no CDG sub-group on tobacco will meet in the near future because the European Union has decided to stop granting direct subsidies to tobacco producers.

Products such as tobacco still serve an important economic and social role in some regions. They represent a fundamental source of income and employment for growers and their families. Furthermore, they have a significant importance especially in some disadvantaged areas where there are no economical viable alternatives.

Within these sub-groups, we are dealing with the livelihoods of millions of operators and not only farmers and young farmers in the EU value chain. This is about economic resilience, survival and generation renewal of farming communities, taking into account the wider expectations of the European society. Despite the difficult economical period, we believe in brighter future, in particular in mitigating some of the major environmental challenges such as climate change.

The ambitions promoted in the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 (e.g. the European Green deal that includes the Farm to Fork strategy) would require a broad involvement of all European agricultural sectors. The dialogue between DG AGRI officials and the farming sector representatives that take place within CDGs will be extremely valuable in this context.

Copa and Cogeca are convinced that DG AGRI should retain its strategic responsibility for EU agri-food policies and continue as a leading DG in this context. We are committed in supporting your key role including through our participation in the CDGs.

Copa and Cogeca members are confident that they will maintain a fruitful cooperation with DG AGRI in this context.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,



Pekka Pesonen
Secretary General

Cc: Michael Niejahr and [REDACTED], DG AGRI