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Press Release

COGECA BUSINESS FORUM – International agri-cooperatives on building resilient and sustainable global food supply chains

The Cogeca Presidency held its traditional Business Forum today, gathering representatives of international agri-food cooperatives to discuss the role of their cooperatives in building “Resilient and Sustainable Global Food Supply Chains”. Reflecting above all on the pass year, and assessing the situations and pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic, agri-cooperative representatives focused on the future outlooks of economic, trade and regulatory developments that directly influence the competitiveness of agri-food cooperative enterprises across the world.

An audience made of 100+ participants had a comprehensive view on the post-pandemic economic developments and an accurate forecast on future investment scenarios necessary for the recovery and growth in the agri-food sector. In addition, considering that the pandemic brought new critical elements to be considered in the trade policy agenda in the EU and around the world, the Forum also focused on the direct correlation between trade and food security.

A set of insightful presentations made by agri-food cooperatives operating in Europe, Asia, North and South Americas presented different approaches used by these farmer-owned enterprises to not merely withstand shocks but actually improve their business models and competitiveness.

“During the pandemic, the EU agri-food supply chain demonstrated a high degree of resilience. Our agri-cooperatives have played their role!”, Cogeca President Ramon Armengol stated.

“From farm to fork, agri-cooperatives worked on resolving the drawbacks in the food supply chain, which risked causing significant disruptions and economic damages. On the other hand, cooperatives also managed to create new opportunities. Some launched new products and created new market outlets, others have socially supported those who were in the first line fighting against the virus. We had, in fact, the possibility to witness some new innovations improving resilience and creating economic or social value”, he continued.

On the sustainability element of the global supply chain, President Armengol indicated that, *“We are aware of the enormous pressures put on our food systems, in particular in terms of climate change and, more broadly, from the sustainability challenges. Although it might look like our climate responses focus primarily on measures that have a short-term and cost-saving effect, our cooperatives are in many cases forerunners of long term solutions and production improvements.”*

The Forum also presented an excellent opportunity to discuss the governance and steering mechanism necessary to implement comprehensive sustainability strategies that are more and more at the core of each cooperatives enterprises through assessments, processes, and planning.

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Translations will be available in DE, ES, FR, IT, PL and RO on the Copa-Cogeca website soon.

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