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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca welcome European Parliament's support for EU sheep and goat farmers

Copa and Cogeca welcome European Parliament's vote today on a report highlighting the multiple benefits of support for EU sheep and goat farmers via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The own-initiative report, drawn up by Spanish MEP Esther Herranz Garcia for European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, is in line with the EU Sheep Meat Forum recommendations to have strong support in the sheep sector via the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), with an emphasis on rewarding sheep farming in areas with natural constraints. They have been welcomed by Copa and Cogeca. The work of MEP Esther Herranz Garcia and of European Parliament is also welcome news.

Parliament's report calls to at least maintain the voluntary coupled aid for sheep and goat farmers, extend the agri-environmental payments to pastures used for sheep and goat grazing and better support farmers who do more in terms of animal welfare. MEPs also want measures, in their report which was approved by a large majority of MEPs today, to enhance farmers competitiveness and boost promotion measures.

Copa and Cogecas' Sheepmeat Working Party Chairwoman Michèle Boudoin highlighted the huge benefits of the sector for maintaining rural areas and biodiversity, underlining that 70% of areas facing natural handicaps are grazed by sheep in the EU. "But the sector is up against many challenges and farmer's incomes remain fragile. It is essential to ensure that the market is balanced and that producers have enough money to be able to produce. Strong support via the CAP is crucial for this", she explained. "The EU must ensure that CAP spending in the future EU budget is at least maintained, otherwise we risk facing an exodus from the rural areas especially of young people. It is crucial to make these areas attractive again to young people", she concluded.

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