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Press Release

European agri-food and forestry cooperatives sign the Tarragona Manifesto in support of new generations of farmers, forest owners and cooperators

Members of Cogeca, the organisation representing 22,000 European cooperative enterprises operating in the agri-food and forestry sectors, have consulted young cooperators, their cooperative enterprises, and their stakeholders to anticipate trends for the agricultural and forestry sectors and be equipped to respond to the critical challenge of generational renewal faced by European agriculture and rural areas.

In this context, today Cogeca published its Tarragona Manifesto to secure the future of farming in Europe. The manifesto includes twenty-three aspirational objectives of agri-food and forestry cooperatives in support of young farmers and cooperators.

This text is a first response of the European agri-cooperative movement to address the needs underlined by young farmers and forest owners during the Cogeca Presidency Business Forum on generational renewal held in November 2023 in Tarragona, Spain. During the event, young farmers and forest-owners, agricultural cooperative leaders, and high-level policymakers strategically exchanged on the needs of new entrants in the agricultural sector, and exchanged best practices and strategies put in place by agri-food and forestry cooperatives to secure ‘’generational sustainability’’ of the sectors.

While considering the positive externalities already created by agri-cooperatives to address the generational challenge, it clearly emerged that much more needs to be done to stop a critical trend that may endanger the long-term sustainability of the sectors and cooperative enterprises, as well as food security in the EU.

‘’At the origins of this initiative there are two observations: today, young farmers and forest owners need agri-food and forestry cooperatives. As an experienced farmer, I always underlined to my son who is now running our farm that cooperatives are the tool to holistically improve farmers’ position in the food supply chain, add value to their products, reduce costs and boost the sustainability of the sectors in which they operate. It is the way forward!’’ explained Cogeca’s President, Ramon Armengol. ‘’On the other hand, and in the longer term, against a backdrop of major transitions affecting our sectors and enterprises, they will need young people who are fully engaged in the cooperative governance structure and possessing the abilities to carry out major transformations. In the future, without these young women and men, the relevance of our cooperative enterprises is at risk’’ concluded Ramon Armengol.

This is an important initiative of Cogeca and a starting point to boost the support given to new generations to enter the agri-food and forestry sectors and be active players in the running of these democratic companies that place long-termism at the core of the business development.

**-END-**

The Tarragona manifesto is available for download and dissemination [here](https://www.copa-cogeca.eu/publications).

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

About us - Copa and Cogeca are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, we ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, while guaranteeing food security for 500 million people throughout Europe. >>> More information [www.copa-cogeca.eu](http://www.copa-cogeca.eu)

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