



copa 
european farmers

The voice of
European farmers



Copa is the key organisation representing farming interests both in the EU and Europe in general. Through its over 60 member and partner organisations from every EU Member State, as well as from countries such as Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey, it truly is “the voice of European farmers”.

Our history

Copa was officially founded on 6 September 1958 as the Committee of Agricultural Organisations by 13 farmers' organisations from the then six Member States. It was the first organisation to represent European farmers and is almost as old as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

One year later, on 24 September 1959, the agricultural cooperatives of the European Community created their own umbrella organisation, Cogeca (General Committee for Agricultural Cooperation in the European Community, later changed to the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union).

Copa has had a secretariat in Brussels since 1 April 1959 and a joint Copa-Cogeca secretariat has been in operation since 1 December 1962.

Various rounds of EU enlargement have also increased Copa's membership. The single biggest of those so far was that of 1 May 2004, when 38 farmers' and cooperative organisations from the new EU Member States joined Copa and Cogeca.

Our objectives

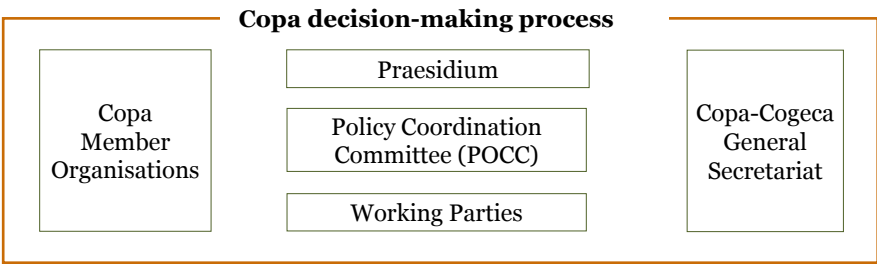
Copa enables farmers to have their political interests represented at a European level. To this end, it has five central objectives:

1. Represent European farmers and promote their interests, their income and a strong agricultural sector
2. Influence policy decisions which affect agriculture by lobbying EU institutions and organisations at EU and international level
3. Promote the multifunctional role of farmers in society
4. Provide a platform for discussion between its members
5. Seek and promote solutions on issues of common interest



Our decision-making process

Copa is more than a lobbying organisation, because it is based on fundamentally democratic principles. All our office-holders are elected by the Copa bodies and in turn by the members of their organisations.



Praesidium

The Praesidium is Copa’s highest decision-making body. Its role is to represent Copa and set general policy guidelines for the organisation. It meets around six times per year and brings together the representatives of all member organisations, normally at President or Director-General level. Praesidium positions are drawn up jointly with Cogeca whenever they concern the agricultural sector as a whole.

Presidency

The Praesidium elects a President and six Vice-Presidents from amongst its members for a two-year term of office. The President and Vice-Presidents divide up their work on the basis of political dossiers and serve as Copa’s highest-level representatives.

Policy Coordination Committee (POCC)

The POCC is a regular meeting of senior staff from the member organisations. It ensures consistency between Copa positions in the different sectors, prepares Praesidium meetings and coordinates follow-up action and lobbying.

Working Parties

Copa has 45 working parties, ranging from specific commodity issues to general questions. They consist of the respective experts from the member organisations. Most working parties are joint Copa-Cogeca bodies, although there is a small number of separate working parties as well (e.g. the Copa Women’s Committee).

Secretariat

The Secretariat assures the smooth and efficient running of the two organisations and implements decisions made by the Copa and Cogeca Praesidia. It has approximately 50 staff members from all around Europe and operates in six working languages: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish.





Our vision

We want to ensure that the future CAP enables farmers in Europe to meet citizens' aspirations and concerns in the face of the challenges of the 21st century and that it is based on recognition of the following principles:

- ◇ The vital nature of farmers' economic role – to provide essential food supplies - and their wider role of meeting society's territorial, environmental and social objectives distinguish it from other economic sectors
- ◇ The CAP of the future should recognise that farmers are entrepreneurs and wish to obtain as large a proportion of their income as possible from the market. However, it should also be clearly recognised that farmers provide services, some of which are not currently adequately remunerated via the market and others which never will be
- ◇ Agriculture should contribute to the reinforcement of the European Union - the CAP must remain a common policy with common rules to ensure that competition within the single EU market is not distorted, while taking into account the diversity of European agriculture
- ◇ Financial solidarity is necessary to ensure greater economic and social cohesion and integration throughout the EU of 27 Member States and a better rural/urban balance.

Our members

For a full and up-to-date list of Copa's members, together with contact information in both Brussels and the Member States, please consult our website.

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PUB(09)5124:1