THE DECLARATION

FUTURE CAP AND EU MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Investing in Cooperation, Investing in European Agriculture

Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias de España

Danish Agriculture & Food Council

ICOS

Deutscher Raiffeisenverband

CONFCOOPERATIVE

Pellervo – Finnish Cooperatives (MTK)

La coopération agricole

Österreichischer Raiffeisenverband

As negotiations on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) enter a decisive phase, Europe must determine how it will support the competitiveness, resilience and long-term investment capacity of its agricultural sector.

The outcomes of the Cogeca Presidency Business Forum, held in Almería on 9–10 November 2026, reinforced a clear message: strengthening European agriculture requires strengthening its cooperatives. The Forum's conclusions highlighted the need for a strong and genuinely common CAP, effective sectoral instruments and an EU investment framework that recognises the strategic role of agricultural cooperation.

Building on these conclusions, the undersigned organisations call for the future EU budget and agricultural policies to provide the necessary conditions for agri-cooperatives to invest, innovate, grow and strengthen farmers' position in the food value chain.

European agri-cooperatives are a cornerstone of the European agricultural model. Owned and governed by farmers, they enable producers to pool resources, achieve scale, strengthen their position in the value chain, invest collectively and access markets. They create value throughout the food chain, foster innovation and contribute to food security and economic resilience, particularly in rural areas.

Agri-cooperatives are not only agricultural organisations but also competitive enterprises that allow farmers to process, market and add value to their production collectively. They are therefore essential to ensuring that a greater share of the value generated in the agri-food chain remains with farmers and rural communities.

Recognising agri-cooperatives as strategic partners in delivering a competitive, sustainable and resilient European agri-food system must translate into concrete policy commitments. The future EU policy and investment framework should create the conditions for long-term investment, technological leadership, market integration and fair competition.

A strong cooperative sector means a stronger Single Market, greater food security, more resilient rural communities and a more competitive European agri-food economy



1. INVESTMENT IN AGRI-COOPERATIVES

Maintaining Europe's competitiveness requires sustained investment throughout the agricultural value chain. Agri-cooperatives invest on behalf of thousands of farmers in processing facilities, storage, logistics, renewable energy, digitalisation, research and innovation. Their capacity to continue making these long-term investments must be promoted and protected.

The EU should:

- Protect investment support for agri-cooperatives under future CAP and other EU financial instruments. Mechanisms affecting farmers' direct income support, including capping and degressivity, should not penalise farmers for organising collectively through a cooperative. They should apply exclusively at the level of the individual farmer-member.
- Recognise cooperatives as strategic beneficiaries of investment measures, reflecting their role in strengthening farmers' economic resilience and their capacity to transform investment into collective infrastructure and economic opportunities for farmers.
- Facilitate access to EU financing and investment instruments for cooperative projects, including large-scale and cross-border investments.
- Provide a stable, predictable, and proportionate regulatory environment that encourages long-term investment and innovation.



2. ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN COMPETITIVENESS FUND

The scale of investment required to modernise the European agri-food value chain goes beyond the capacity of agricultural policy alone. The European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) must recognise agriculture and agri-cooperatives as strategic contributors to Europe's competitiveness, resilience, food security and economic security. It should open up additional opportunities for collective investment and the deployment of innovation at scale.

The EU should:

- Ensure effective access for agricultural cooperatives to the European Competitiveness Fund, including dedicated financial allocations for agriculture across the Fund's relevant policy windows.
- Provide simplified, accessible financing conditions suited to the cooperative business model and ensure meaningful participation by the agricultural cooperative sector in the Fund's governance.
- Support strategic collective investments in processing and storage capacity, logistics, digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, water and energy resilience, and the large-scale uptake of innovation throughout the agri-food value chain.
- Guarantee complementarity between the ECF, the CAP and the Common Market Organisation (CMO). The ECF must provide additional investment capacity, not replace CAP or CMO funding, sectoral interventions or operational programmes.



3. PROMOTING INNOVATION

The future competitiveness of European agriculture depends on continuous innovation. Agri-cooperatives have a key role in bringing and adapting innovation to farmers by pooling investment, knowledge and technical expertise and facilitating the uptake of new technologies at scale. EU legislation should remain science-based and technologically neutral.

The EU should:

- Promote the responsible development and deployment of modern breeding techniques.
- Support innovation in seeds, plant breeding, fertilisers, crop protection, precision agriculture, biotechnology, robotics and digital technologies including artificial intelligence.
- Encourage the development and rapid uptake of new technologies that improve productivity, resource efficiency, resilience and environmental performance.
- Strengthen research, demonstration and knowledge-transfer programmes involving agri-cooperatives, recognising their capacity to bring innovation directly to large numbers of farmers.



4. ENSURING A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

European producers operate under some of the world's most demanding production standards. EU policies must ensure that these standards do not result in European production being displaced by imports produced under substantially different requirements.

The EU should:

- Take into account different climatic conditions, crops, pest pressures and agronomic realities across Member States.
- Make sure farmers retain access to effective crop protection tools whenever safe and scientifically justified alternatives are not yet available.
- Support an ambitious EU export strategy that enables cooperatives to diversify export destinations, strengthen the international presence of European agri-food products and be able to respond to growing global demand.
- Promote greater reciprocity in production standards alongside stronger controls and enforcement to ensure that imported products comply with applicable EU requirements.