



Secure gas supply critical to maintain EU food supplies

Brussels, 20 July 2022 – The EU agri-food sector has backed the European Commission’s “[save gas for a safe winter](#)” proposal, published today, which singles out the critical importance of Europe’s food supply chain and the need for a secure supply of gas to maintain food security.

Agri-food chain associations Copa-Cogeca, the Primary Food Processors (PFP) and FoodDrinkEurope have urged Member States to listen to the Commission’s recommendation that they recognise the agri-food chain as a critical sector in their national emergency plans in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Any disruption to the gas supply would impact the availability of agricultural commodities and prevent food and feed manufacturers from operating at full capacity. This would impact the availability of food supplied to consumers and feed for animals, with a risk of shortages.

Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General of Copa-Cogeca, said: “Over the past year, the costs of electricity, natural gas, fertilisers, transport fuel, and external labour have increased dramatically, which is already having a severe impact on European farmers and the EU agri-food sector as a whole. These existing difficulties would be exacerbated by gas rationing, which would have an additional impact on the availability and affordability of food and feed. Today’s Communication sends a clear message to Member States: give the agri-food sector priority access to gas supplies, right behind households and hospitals.”

Huub Scheres, PFP President, said: “Primary food processors are highly dependent on gas. If not prioritised in case of gas rationing, some plants may be unable to continue operations, leading to waste of perishable raw materials and strain on the availability and prices of a large array of products, both food and essential non-food.”

Dirk Jacobs, Director General of FoodDrinkEurope, said: “Food and drink manufacturers process agricultural commodities in a continuous process that is incompatible with a ‘stop-and-go’ approach. Any interruption in gas supplies could have a significant impact on the overall volume of food and feed that can be produced. It’s good that the European Commission recognises the strategic role the agri-food supply chain plays in the EU. We are confident that Member States will take its advice on board.”

The agri-food sector organisations remain committed to working together to maintain reliable food supplies to consumers in Europe and beyond and stand ready

to continue the dialogue with EU institutions on monitoring of market developments and the energy supply situation.

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About us:

[FoodDrinkEurope](#) represents the food and drink manufacturing industry. Made up of 289,000 businesses and 4.5 million workers, the food and drink industry buys 70% of all EU agricultural produce and is one of Europe's largest manufacturing industries.

[Copa and Cogeca](#) are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents 22 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 66 member organisations from the EU member states.

[Primary Food Processors](#) members process approximately 220 million tons of raw materials (cereals, sugar beet, rapeseeds, soybeans, sunflower seeds, crude vegetable oil, cocoa products and starch potatoes) employing over 120 000 people in the European Union.