



Rural Coalition launched, representing the voice of the European rural population

Five of the leading European organisations at the heart of rural affairs collaborate for a common purpose.

Brussels, 7 April 2011 - Copa-Cogeca, CEJA, ELO, FACE and UECBV joined forces today to launch the Rural Coalition of Europe. The move comes in a bid to strengthen the voice of Europe's rural population and to increase the competitiveness of the EU agriculture sector. The Coalition's first official meeting took place today at the headquarters of Copa-Cogeca.

Speaking in Brussels, the inaugural chairman of the Rural Coalition Thierry de l'Escaille, ELO Secretary General said, "The Coalition will pay particular attention to promoting a coherent approach in assessing and communicating the role of rural areas in the EU as well as supporting any actions aimed at improving the conditions of those owning land and working in these areas".

Angus Middleton, FACE CEO pointed out that in an increasingly urbanised Europe, the Rural Coalition will be crucial in highlighting the pivotal role of rural stakeholders in the development and management of rural land areas in a multifunctional and sustainable manner that meets social, economic and environmental requirements.

Jean-Luc Mériaux, UECBV Secretary General continued, "The Rural Coalition also aims to improve the competitiveness of the EU rural economies, whilst maintaining the environmental balance of production, for example in livestock sector". At the same time, the Coalition will communicate the needs and aspirations of rural stakeholders in developing and implementing rural development policies.

Pascale Rouhier, CEJA Secretary General insisted that "The Coalition will also support policies designed to promote generation renewal in rural areas and especially ease the installation of young farmers, to ensure the continued development of the profession in the future".

Copa-Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen concluded by underlining "The EU's rural areas make up 80% of the total area. Agriculture and the EU's agri-food sector provide over 40 million jobs mostly in rural areas. Yet the voice of rural stakeholders is often not represented adequately. The Rural Coalition consequently aims to promote and defend the importance of rural areas and stakeholders, including farmers, foresters, landowners, agricultural and forestry workers, hunters and tourism operators".

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Copa-Cogeca is 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 over 13 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 38,000 agricultural cooperatives. They have 76 member organisations from the EU member states. www.copa-cogeca.be



CEJA represents one million of young farmers on a European level and is considered as one of the key advocates for the agricultural sector; it is the voice of Europe's next generation of farmers to the European institutions. CEJA's main objective is to promote a young and innovative agricultural sector across the EU 27 and to create good working and living conditions for young people setting up in farming and those who are already "Young Farmers". Its main objectives are to ease installation of young farmers in Europe, to inform, train and represent them. CEJA achieves this by acting as a forum for communication and dialogue between young farmers and European decision makers. The organisation maintains regular contact with European institutions as well as organizations dealing with agriculture.



ELO (European Landowners Organization) is a unique federation of 67 national associations across the EU27 which represents the interests of landowners, rural managers and entrepreneurs at the European level. ELO defends and promotes a dynamic, prosperous and sustainable countryside based on high environmental standards, economic viability and social fabric. www.elo.org



FACE (Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU) represents and promotes the interests of over 7 million European hunters in accordance with sustainable use of wildlife. It is an international non-profit making NGO whose Members are the national hunters' associations within 36 states of the Council of Europe, including the EU27, as well as 4 Associate Members. www.face.eu



UECBV (The European Livestock and Meat Trading Union) is the mouthpiece of national federations representing livestock markets, livestock traders, the meat industry, and meat traders. In total, some 20,000 firms of all sizes and 250,000 jobs are represented with UECBV through its national member federations (47 national or regional federations in the 27 EU Member States and also in non-EU countries). Also¹ AEMB, YEMCo, ENSCA, OCEAN and EPEGA are brought together within UECBV. <http://www.uecbv.eu>

¹ [European Association of Livestock Markets \(AEMB\)](#), [Young European Meat Committee \(YEMCo\)](#), [European Natural Sausage Casings Association \(ENSCA\)](#), [Organisation of European Ship Suppliers \(OCEAN\)](#), [European Egg poultry and game association \(EPEGA\)](#)



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