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Press Release

Copa & Cogeca oppose EU's offer on agriculture in free trade talks with Latin American Trade bloc Mercosur, warning it will open up the EU's markets to imports without getting much in return

Copa & Cogeca opposed the EU's offer on agriculture in the free trade talks with the Latin American Trade bloc Mercosur which was exchanged in Brussels today by Chief negotiators, warning it will open up the EU's markets to imports without getting much in return.

Speaking after the offers were exchanged, Copa & Cogeca Secretary-General Pekka Pesonen said "Despite warnings from 20 EU Ministers against making an offer on agriculture which includes sensitive agriculture products in the free trade talks, the Commission has gone ahead with the move. Some changes were made to the EU's initial offer but it's not enough for us".

"In particular, I am extremely disappointed that the offer still includes sensitive agriculture products which could destroy our agriculture sector before any clarification was done in terms of removing red tape and other unnecessary non-tariff barriers to trade which stop our exports from entering these countries. Also the Commission failed to carry out an impact assessment which it promised to do", Pesonen said.

He went on to explain that the EU agriculture sector is already in a serious state of crisis and studies show that the EU agri sector risks losing another 7 billion euros from such a deal. Moreover, Mercosur is already a major exporter of agri commodities to the EU, with 86% of our beef imports and 70% of our poultry meat imports coming from these countries. They therefore do not need extra quotas tariff free to increase their trade to the EU, also as little of our beef is let into their countries. "Furthermore, these imports do not meet the EU's high environmental and quality standards and there are still concerns about safety aspects of meat production in these countries such as traceability and the use of antibiotic growth promoters. We need to ensure that our production standards are respected and there has been no talk on this yet", added Pesonen.

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