



ESA_11.0579

Brussels, 15.7.2011

Common statement of ESA and COPA Presidents

European farmers and plant breeders highlight challenges and policy approaches for sustainable and competitive agri-food production in Europe

At a meeting in Brussels, the Presidents of COPA (European farmers organisation) and of ESA (European seed industry) Gerd Sonnleitner and Christoph Amberger discussed the grand challenges of food security, preservation of natural resources and sustainable intensification of production, the contribution of farmers and plant breeders to addressing these, and the necessary political and legislative support of societies and regulators on EU and national level.

The Presidents specifically underlined the importance of promoting innovation in the European agri-food chain and agreed to charge the Secretaries General of their organisations, Pekka Pesonen (COPA-COGECA) and Garlich v. Essen (ESA) to elaborate a work plan for a "Partnership for Innovation" on the base of an already established cooperation within the European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future' where farmers and breeders collaborate with public research.

Assuring identity, performance, quality and health of seed were agreed to constitute the pillars of a successful plant production chain and both organisations agreed that these need to be maintained in the upcoming revision of the EU's legal frameworks for seed marketing and plant health.

Presidents concluded that in view of the overhaul of a large part of the body of legislation governing the farming and plant breeding sector over the coming years, and based on common interests and shared priorities, the regular exchange between farmers and breeders on European level shall be maintained and intensified.