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**Call for support to maintain the integrity of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety**

from the meeting of representatives of the Agricultural Chambers of the Visegrad Group countries, which took place on 17. June in Choťovice, Czech Republic.

Representatives of the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic, the National Council of Agricultural Chambers (KRIR) in Poland, the Slovak Chamber of Agriculture and Food (SPPK), the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (NAK) participated in a meeting of agricultural chambers of Visegrad Group countries, which took place on 17 – 18 June 2024 in Choťovice, Czech Republic.

Dear Deputy Secretary-General of Copa-Cogeca, Mr. Patrick Pagani,

We would like to ask for your support in the ongoing negotiations in the European Parliament. We are aware of **current efforts by some European political groups that could result in the splitting of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety into two new separate committees - the Environment Committee and the Health Committee**.

Although there is already a Subcommittee on Health within the COMENVI Committee, splitting it into two separate committees would fundamentally change the system of work. While the current subcommittee operates relatively independently, working on its own topics and preparing opinions, it does not endorse opinions. The subcommittee's opinions are forwarded to the main COMENVI Committee for approval.

The division of COMENVI into separate Environment and Health Committees carries, I n our view, significant risks (amongst others):

* The Health Committee will not be sufficiently attractive to MEPs interested in agriculture and the environment;
* The Health Committee will have a negotiating mandate (perhaps even the main one) on issues including also food and labelling - health claims, nutritional value of food, food safety (including pesticide residues), cancer (including foods that some - even refuted - studies suggest contributing to the development of cancer in the population), and others. But these topics also require a relevant debate with representatives of the agriculture and food sectors;
* If the integrity of COMENVI were preserved, its members would not have to choose between topics, but would have access to discuss all relevant environmental, public health and food safety issues simultaneously. In the event of a split, the situation would be dramatically different, MEPs would have to choose which committee and which topics they therefore wanted to pursue.
* At the moment, we are unable to say how the new composition of the two Committees would approach issues such as food health and healthy food; we perceive a risk of a hard-line approach.

**For these reasons, we are asking Copa-Cogeca for active help in trying to maintain the integrity of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. We also believe that MEPs should be encouraged to participate in both the main committees on agri-food issues, i.e. both COMAGRI and COMENVI, and that agri-food topics should be shared competences between these committees. We also believe, and at the same time call for support, that COMAGRI should have core competencies on these topics.**

We therefore ask for your active support on the above points.

In Choťovice on the 17th of June 2024

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| ……………………………………….  Jan Doležal  President of AKČR | ……………………………………….  Wiktor Szmulewicz  President of KRIR |
| ……………………………………….  Andrej Gajdoš  President of SPPK | ……………………………………….  Balázs Győrffy  President of NAK  Represented by Szilvia Palakovics |