

## Program

# Cogeca Seminar “What is the Role of Cooperatives in Achieving Affordable, Secure and Sustainable Energy?”

**When:** 21 June 2023, 16:00 –18:00 CET

**Where:** Physical meeting (Copa-Cogeca Premises)

## What is the Role of Cooperatives in Achieving Affordable, Secure and Sustainable Energy?

The new geopolitical and energy market realities have resulted in the REPowerEU initiative, which aims to achieve energy independence from Russia by 2030. Cogeca, along with Copa, also recognise that energy is crucial to fulfilling the Commission’s targets under the Fit for 55 initiative. European agri-cooperatives committed to making the EU climate-neutral by 2050, by reducing our emissions, producing biofuels, bioenergy, and bio-based materials for other industries, and by increasing/ maintaining the carbon sink that agriculture and forestry can represent by optimising CO2 absorption of ecosystems while replacing fossil fuels.

For agri-cooperatives, energy scarcity threatens temporary closure for cooperatives, and disruption to livelihoods, rural communities and the European food supply chain. Concurrently, we also recognise new opportunities for agri-cooperatives engaged in energy production and their potential to contribute to the goals of the Initiative, that is ensuring a supply of affordable, secure and sustainable energy, whether this be biogas, solar or other forms of renewables.

By definition, agricultural operators operate in a decentralized manner and can therefore play a role as an alternative to the current classical centralised energy model. Experience has shown that electricity grids in rural areas are often insufficient and must be improved.

Agri-cooperatives have a key role to play in achieving the energy needs of agriculture in the coming years. Agri-cooperatives can leverage economies of scale and deep knowledge of the communities they are part of, the sectors in which they operate, and the value chain to identify opportunities for efficiencies and innovation. Through this, they can implement initiatives that produce renewable energy, thereby addressing challenges of rural areas in accessing electricity.

These farmer-owned businesses also act as essential agents for knowledge-transfer to farmers and can provide advice to their farmers on how they can produce using less energy. This efficient approach results in less carbon-intensive farming and reduces costs of energy consumption for farmers. Additionally, many agri-cooperatives are key players in EU projects. For example, between 2016 and 2019, agri-cooperatives took part in the SCOOPE project, which worked directly with energy-intensive agro-food industries to implement cross-cutting and collaborative energy management systems aimed at reducing energy consumption, and which



showcased the role of agri-cooperatives in knowledge-transfer, involving technicians, businesses managers, and energy and agro-food institutions.

Agri-cooperatives are well-positioned throughout the value-chain, they are in close proximity to farmers, and they also have expertise and proven experience of providing affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Energy is of critical importance to European agriculture and given its current geopolitical significance, this event will explore how they can respond to today's challenges.

## **Agenda**

**16:00 – 16:05 - Opening remarks by Christian Høegh-Andersen, Coordinator of the Cogeca Presidency Business Forum**

**16:05 – 16:20 – Keynote Speech by Fabien Santini, Deputy Head of Unit for the Governance of Agri-Food Markets at DG AGRI**

**16:20 – 17:50 – Roundtable discussion moderated by Damien O'Reilly, European Affairs & Communications Manager**

**Gabriel Trenzado, Director General of Cooperativas Agro-alimentarias (Spain)**

**Speaker from DLG Group (Denmark)**

**Agnieszka Maliszewska- Director of the Polish Chamber of Milk and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of Cogeca (Poland)**

**17:50 – 18:00 – Closing remarks by Cogeca President Ramon Armengol**

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