



Press Release – 18 December 2012

**Food and crop diversity under threat in Europe
THE AGRI-FOOD CHAIN URGES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO ACT
IMMEDIATELY ON THE LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF PLANT PROTECTION
PRODUCTS FOR MINOR USES AND SPECIALITY CROPS**

The lack of plant protection products for minor uses and speciality crops is becoming a crucial factor for future cultivation of these crops in the European Union. *“The lack of proper tools compromises not only the competitiveness of the entire agri-food chain, including its sustainability and the employment generated, but also the diversity high quality food in Europe”* - said Luc Peeters chairman of the COPA-COGECA’s phytosanitary group, on behalf of the 10 agri-food chain associations¹.

The European Commission was due to present a report to the European Parliament and Council on how to tackle the issue of minor uses and speciality crops on 14th December 2011, as foreseen under Regulation (EC) 1107/2009. The ongoing delay of publication of this report is not encouraging for European agriculture. The need for action was also recognised by the European Member States².

Since 2009, 10 EU associations representing the entire agri-food chain have been calling for solutions and proper investment schemes to support minor uses and speciality crops and to improve the availability of tailor made solutions for their protection.

“This is a unique opportunity to improve the difficult situation on the ground and get ready to face new challenges in future” - continues Luc Peeters - *“Coordination across all twenty-seven Member States and support for data generation are both key to ensure the availability of solutions to control pests and diseases. Minor uses and speciality crops should not be seen in isolation from Regulation 1107/2009 and the Zonal process for the efficient working of the product authorisation process. A coordination group with a wider role will provide greater benefits and ensure that more solutions can be found for minor uses”*.

“We therefore call on the European Commission to speed up the publication of the report and support an ambitious plan aiming at setting up a permanent EU programme for minor uses and speciality crops, accompanied by a coherent funding programme.” – he concluded.

¹ The 10 agri-food chain associations are AREFLH, CELCAA, COCERAL, COPA-COGECA, ECPA, ESA, Freshfel, IBMA, PROFEL, Union Fleurs.

² Food Chain Evaluation Consortium, Study on the establishment of a European fund for minor uses in the field of PPP, undertaken under DG SANCO contract, June 2011, published September 2011; Agri-Food Chain Conference on Minor Uses, November 2011.



Note:

Minor uses concern fruit and vegetables, cereals, including rice, seeds, hops, flowers and all those plants that need a tailor made plant protection product, whether it is for growing them, storage or transportation.

Speciality crops are valued at about €70 billion per year, representing 22% of the total output value of the agricultural sector. The fruit and vegetable sector alone accounts for about €45 billion in EU-27 for a total production of 70 million tons of vegetables and 40 million tons of fruits. The market value for ornamental plants is estimated at €27 billion.

Minor use authorisations ensure both the protection of high value speciality crops to meet consumer's right for high quality, healthy agricultural and food products at affordable prices whilst contributing to maintaining a competitive European food value chain.

It is therefore important that urgent solutions are found for acute problems while a sustainable long-term system needs to be developed that is consistent throughout the European Union.

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