

EU CODE OF CONDUCT ON RESPONSIBLE FOOD BUSINESS AND MARKETING PRACTICES

*A common aspirational path
towards achieving sustainable food systems*

- Annual Report – Check list for EU associations -

When signing the code, one of the commitments of EU associations is to provide “*on an annual basis, a report of their activities in support of this Code, which will be published on an open dedicated website*”.

In order to help EU associations provide their annual report of activities, this document aims to provide as a check list to guide associations.

- **General information**

Name in full + acronym	Copa-Cogeca
Contact person with contact details	Bruno Menne, Bruno.menne@copa-cogeca.eu
N° in the transparency register*	Copa: 44856881231-49 Cogeca: 09586631237-74
Date of signature of the Code	2 nd July 2021
Step of the food chain represented (ex: primary production, production, processing, trade, retail, ...)	Primary production and processing
Who do you represent? (e.g. number of members, companies, SMEs)	Copa represents over 23 million farmers, whilst Cogeca represents 22,000 agricultural cooperatives.

* if available

European Associations pledge to:

- *endorse the aspirational objectives set out in this Code (where applicable)*

✓ Please confirm:

Copa and Cogeca confirm that it endorses the aspirational objectives set out in the Code.

- *promote and disseminate this Code with(in) their constituency/ies;*
Describe the dissemination and promotion activities taken. For ex.: Internal meetings (ex: working group, task force, board meeting, AGM), workshop, webinars, other events, communication, mailings, messages, documents, leaflets, website, newsletter, etc

The Code and its aspirational objectives were presented to our members through the following channels:

- Copa and Cogeca Praesidia
- Copa and Cogeca Policy Coordination Committee
- Cooperative Coordination Committee
- The various Working Parties of Copa-Cogeca

Regarding Copa and Cogeca's Working Parties, we organised for each of them a dedicated session with a very detailed presentation of the Code followed by a Q&A session. Moreover, the Secretariat had put in place a wide communication campaign on newsletters for Copa and Cogeca members and social media. In addition, the Copa and Cogeca Secretariat also held bilateral meetings with members to provide more detailed information when required.

The Code was also promoted at the occasion of the European Award for Cooperative Sustainability-driven Innovation.

- *encourage their members to align their sustainability actions and/or business practices to the aspirational objectives and targets of the Code and invite them, on a voluntary basis, to adhere to this Code, as appropriate;*

- ✓ Was it part of the messages delivered under the promotion activities?
- ✓ Any specific action? Ex: inclusion of the CoC in the vision/mission, roadmap/working programme, ...
- ✓ Any indication that the message has been considered by members? If relevant, please give examples.
- ✓ Information transferred to the members
- ✓

The Copa and Cogeca membership base is made up of national organisations representing farmers and agri-cooperatives. These organisations have been called to promote the Code adoption among their own membership bases.

We have organised dedicated sessions with Copa and Cogeca's various Working Parties. These working parties organise our work with our members on specific topics or sectors. Therefore, those dedicated sessions allowed us to adapt the promotion of the Code to the specificities of each of those topics and sector, focusing more on the aspirational targets directly related to them. The documents used for those presentations, have of course been made available to all members.

In addition, Copa and Cogeca not only encouraged its members to align their activities with the aspirational objectives of the Code and promote it among their own members, but we

also invited them to share those activities with us through the creation of a dedicated collection system. Please find here some of the activities promoting the Code or aligned with its aspirational objectives that have been conducted by our members:

- Presentation of the Code at the annual conference of the Austrian dairy industry in October 2021 by our Austrian member Österreichischer Raiffeisenverband.
- VOG Products, a member of Copa-Cogeca member Assomela, in line with aspirational objective 2 “Prevention and reduction of food loss and waste“, contributed to the "Zero Food Waste initiative", aiming at preventing and reducing food loss and waste by valorizing all apples, including those that are either too large, too small or with not enough bright colours for the fresh produce market.
- In line with aspirational objective 3 “A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050“, our member Assomela initiated in January 2022 a new research project with the University of Bolzano, aiming at studying the environmental footprint of Italian apples from the orchard to the supermarket. They also started, in March 2022, a new LCA analysis of the Italian apple sector.
- ACOPAEX, a Spanish cooperative under our member Cooperativas Agro-Alimentarias, decided, together with other companies, to set up a stone fruit concentrate line in one of their tomato processing factories. In doing so, they achieved the dual objective of, on the one hand, solving the problem of where to "eliminate" products that the market did not demand and, on the other, obtaining a minimum income for production that had no commercial outlet. In addition, within the operational programmes of the Fruit and Vegetable Producers' Organisation, making use of the market crisis management programmes, when prices fall below the profitability threshold, ACOPAEX activates agreements with Food Banks throughout the country. They do this in order, on the one hand, prevent prices from falling and, on the other, to make fruit available for free distribution to those most in need.
- On top of promoting the Code to its own members, our member La Coopération Agricole engaged in many activities linked to different aspirational objectives of the Code such as:
 - The publication of a food donation guide.
 - The establishment of trainings about the new organic regulation.
 - The promotion of FRET 21, a tool to reduce GHGs emission linked to freight.
 - They awarded 4 environmental solutions led by French cooperatives about climate change, circular economy and sustainable farming.

Moreover, a wide call for engagement was launched to promote the submission of commitments, related to the second component of the Code, by enterprises operating in the value chain, and in particular agri-food cooperatives.

Thanks to those various promotion activities, some of our member organisations, or their own respective members, have signed the Code such as Assomela or the Danish Crown.

- *explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code;*
- Did your EU association explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code?

- How? Which type of tools? On which aspirational objective(s)? Any achievement?
- For example, did you collect best practices? did you allocate human resources? Budget? Etc.,

Copa and Cogeca have collected the best practices aiming at boosting the sustainability of the sector. The **European Award for Cooperative Innovation** has been launched to further promote and disseminate the sustainability actions aligned to the aspirational objectives put in place by agri-food cooperatives.

The 5th edition focused on sustainability-driven innovation. Creating new market outlets, products, services, or processes driven by economic, social, or environmental objectives is key in the current market and political environment. The award aimed to recognise outstanding innovation and value creation that actively integrate sustainability considerations (economic, social and environmental) into cooperative enterprise systems, from conceptualization to research, development and marketing. Products, services, projects, programmes, and technologies, as well as new business models and organisational/governance structures were invited to be presented and run for the award. With the launch and the selection procedure of the winners in 2021, the Copa-Cogeca Secretariat and Cogeca members have put in place a wide-spread communication campaign, which while promoting the applications of agri-food cooperatives, was drawing links to the aspirational goals set in the Code, and therefore promoting the Code within cooperative enterprises that can adhere to it under its second component.

Regarding **aspirational objective 1** of the Code “Healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for all European consumers” and objective 7 “Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains”, Copa and Cogeca started working with FEFAC, the European Feed Manufacturers’ Association, and FEFANA, the European Association for specialty feed ingredients businesses, to develop a code of good labelling practices for sustainability labelling for feed. This code contributed, at a later stage, in providing consumers with thorough information regarding the sustainability of products from animal origin.

Regarding **aspirational objective 3** “A climate neutral food chain in Europe by 2050” and **aspirational objective 4** “An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe”, a Cogeca Presidency Business Forum was organised focusing on “Resilient and Sustainable Global Food Supply Chains”. The forum gathered C-level representatives of European, South American and Asian agri-food-cooperatives to discuss how agri-cooperatives can deliver on ambitious political targets, aspirational objectives of the Code and consumer expectations to produce more with less, in a reliable and profitable manner, and ultimately support the economic recovery, especially in rural areas. Best practices were shared on how to: a) reduce net emissions from own operations; b) improve resource-efficiency; c) to contribute to sustainable, efficient use and management of energy and natural resources.

With specific regard to the **aspirational objective 4 “An optimised circular and resource-efficient food chain in Europe”**, Copa and Cogeca collaborated with BIO EAST and BBI in the organisation of the workshop integrating the agricultural primary sector in the sustainable bio-based economy. The workshop aimed to gain an insight and contribute to how value creation, especially for the primary sector, can be increased and how a fairer distribution of

profits between bioeconomy actors can be achieved through a better integration of primary producers in the sustainable feedstock production of bio-based value chains. Business models were identified and discussed that strengthen and empower primary producers and enable them to profit from sustainably produced raw materials while avoiding negative environmental impacts. Copa and Cogeca's main contribution lay in the presentation of best practices presented by farmers and agri-cooperatives.

In addition, Copa and Cogeca, together with Food and Drink Europe and Geopa-Copa, the Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations, is also leading the Pact for Skills, which is aligned with the **aspirational objective 5** of the code "*Sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*" and more specifically with action b) of this aspirational objective "*Supporting a skilled workforce and providing safe and inclusive workplaces for all*". In this respect, the organisation is cooperating with the European Commission, EIT Food, Universities, companies, national organisations and trade unions.

The 'Pact for Skills' represents an opportunity to upskill and reskill the current workforce and make the agri-food ecosystem more attractive to young people, while providing a life-long learning perspective to both employers and employees. To achieve this, the partnership, coordinated by Copa-Cogeca, FoodDrinkEurope and Geopa, and supported by DG GROW, DG EMPL and DG AGRI, aims to set a joint strategy to design and implement a sectoral upskilling and reskilling framework, maximising competitiveness of all the actors involved, enhancing job retention and job attractiveness of the agri-food ecosystem within the frame of the Pact for Skills. The partnership should develop the means to monitor the specific Key Performance Indicators that will measure progress towards these goals and help overcome the challenges identified.

To support **aspirational objective 5** of the Code, Copa and Cogeca, through Geopa-Copa, also collaborated with EFFAT, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions, to develop OiRA, an online tool that supports farms in carrying out a risk assessment to ensure a proper Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) management in agriculture. This OiRA tool is a general EU level tool. National OiRA partners can take up this general tool and develop national tools. For farmers it's important to have access to a tool in their own language, taken into account national legislation and good practices. The subsectors covered in this sectoral tool are animal farming, fruits and vegetables.

In addition, with regards to **aspirational objective 6**, "Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership", through the promotion of the cooperative model of enterprises, which is one of the key missions of Cogeca, our organisation continued the promotion of horizontal collaboration at primary level to create shared value, as well as vertical supply chain relations. In addition with regards to indicative action aiming at boosting the uptake of digital solutions and modern technologies, Cogeca has organised a Cogeca Presidency Business Forum on Artificial Intelligence in the Agri-Food System: Rethinking Sustainable Business Models, during which C-level representatives of agri-food cooperatives exchanged on: a) AI function in the agri-food business models from a sustainable perspective;

b) the role of agri-food cooperatives in creating a trustworthy ecosystem; c) the economic, social and environmental benefits deriving from the integration of AI capabilities within the value chain.

Also aligned with **aspirational objective 6**, Copa and Cogeca is working with the Bio-Based Industry Consortium (BIC) on an action plan in the context of the new Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU) to increase the participation and interaction with farmers and agri-cooperatives in this important project for bioeconomy in EU and rural areas. In addition, this will include actions to raise awareness of farmers and cooperatives organisations about the activities and projects of CBE and BIC.

With regards to **aspirational objectives 6** “Sustainable value creation in the European food supply chain through partnership” and **7** “Sustainable sourcing in food supply chains” of the Code, Copa and Cogeca has launched or participated in several research projects whose objectives are aligned with the aspirational objectives promoted by the code such as:

- SMARTCHAIN: this project was coordinated by the University of Hohenheim. The overarching ambition of the project was to support the development of collaborative short food supply chains to improve competitiveness and foster rural development using the multi-actor-approach. As part of the project key parameters that influence sustainable food production and rural development were identified and translated into recommendations that would support SFSC actors, policy makers and business to be more sustainable (<https://www.smartchain-h2020.eu/>).
- Smart Agri Hubs: this project aims to realise the digitisation of European agriculture by fostering an agricultural innovation ecosystem dedicated to excellence, sustainability and success (<https://www.smartagrihubs.eu/about>).

- *continue to engage in dialogue with other food chain/systems actors and EU and international policymakers to forge (new) relationships, exchange good practices and discuss challenges encountered, learn from each other (studies, projects) and create a better mutual understanding, and identify opportunities for collaboration and potential partnership.*

- ✓ Did you engage with other partners of the food chain?
- ✓ Can you give examples of engagements, which partners, on which aspirational objective(s), ...

Copa and Cogeca have continued the exchange with other EU associations and enterprises on the subject, discussing not only the promotion of the Code but also elements related to the needed enablers. In this context, we also engaged with EU associations representing the food manufacturers, retailers, and other primary producers to discuss our respective visions and possible joint actions for topics closely related to the Code’s aspirational objectives such as: nutrition, food information to consumers, sustainability labelling, fair income for primary producers or food security.

Copa and Cogeca also engaged with other EU associations that had not yet signed the Code to encourage them to do so. For example, we presented and promoted the Code to CEJA through a dedicated presentation and Q&A session.

In addition, as mentioned above in the section *“explore the possibility of developing sector-specific tools and resources in support of this Code”*:

- Copa and Cogeca are currently collaborating with FEFAC and FEFANA to develop a code of good labelling practices for the sustainability labelling of feed.
- Copa and Cogeca, through Geopa-Copa, collaborated with FoodDrinkEurope to develop the Pact for Skills.
- Copa and Cogeca also collaborated with EFFAT, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions, to develop the OiRA tool.
- Copa and Cogeca collaborated with the University of Hohenheim for the SMARTCHAIN project.
- Copa and Cogeca are collaborating with the Bio-Based Industry Consortium (BIC) on an action plan in the context of the new Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU).