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## ***Press Release***

### **Farmers oppose EU Commissioner Mandelson on WTO**

Brussels. "I find it impossible to understand how Commissioner Mandelson can press for a trade agreement which will make consumers in the EU even more dependent on imports for their basic food supplies at a time of a world food crisis" said Jean-Michel LEMÉTAYER, President of the European farmers' organisation COPA, on the eve of an important meeting of EU Ministers to discuss the latest proposals in the WTO trade talks.

"European farmers have always supported the need for fair multilateral trade rules but, even assuming the best possible outcome from these trade talks, it will mean a €30 billion annual loss for the farming sector", the President stressed.

"On top of that, there will be serious knock-on effects for the food sector and for employment. The meat processing sector will be particularly badly hit and overall we estimate job losses of half a million at the very least. Nor will there be benefits for EU industry or services", added Gert VAN DIJK, President of the European agri-cooperatives organisation COGECA.

COPA and COGECA have therefore prepared a declaration, refuting the fallacious statements of Commissioner Mandelson like "WTO failure would open the door to protectionism", "The biggest losers would be the poorest countries" and "The EU would also lose if we fail."

"At a time of a food crisis and difficult economic conditions, EU citizens do not want grand political statements about the importance of the WTO", concluded President LEMÉTAYER. "They want to know what exactly it means for them. No deal is better than a bad deal, and the deal currently on the table is very bad."

The declaration is available at:

[http://www.copa-cogeca.be/img/user/File/declaration\\_4649/dec4649-1e.pdf](http://www.copa-cogeca.be/img/user/File/declaration_4649/dec4649-1e.pdf)

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