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PRESS RELEASE

CLITRAVI STATEMENT ON THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

The COVID-19 outbreak appeared in a difficult time for the European meat processing sector. As a matter of fact, since the beginning of 2019, our sector is under pressure due to a sharp increase of prices of pigmeat, mainly caused by a massive import of carcasses from China, where the African Swine Fever devastated the domestic pigs' population.

Despite those conditions, the European meat processing industry demonstrated a strong resilience and is working to assure food security to the citizens and to avoid food shortages.

The main concerns due to the COVID-19 outbreak are the following:

1. **SEVERE DECREASE OF SALES IN THE FOOD SERVICE SECTOR.** Processed meat is a convivial food. **The lockdown of the food service (Ho.re.ca) is having a big impact in terms of decrease of sales, which is only partially compensated by an increase of sales at the supermarket.**
2. **HUMAN SAFETY AND MOTIVATION IN THE WORKPLACES.** The establishment of sanification processes and the provision of protective devices to the employees are preconditions to maintain a safe workplace, even if those measures imply an important extra-cost and, therefore, a **huge financial impact** for processors. In some countries the shortage of protective devices puts companies under additional pressure.

3. **FREE MOVEMENT OF ESSENTIAL GOODS, THEIR COLLATERAL SERVICES AND RELEVANT STAFFS.** The Internal Market experienced some disruptions which resulted in difficult to guarantee the free circulation of raw materials, protective devices, foodstuffs and staffs.

While **the Meat processing sector supports the efficient and very important job that the Commission is doing in these days**, CLITRAVI urges additional measures, which can play an important role also in the **recovery process**.

1. **MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE SINGLE MARKET.** The functioning of the Single Market is a prerequisite to mitigate the crisis and to speed up the recovery once the outbreak will be contained. **There could be neither recovery nor a Green Deal without an internal market deal.** We ask to firmly stop the fragmentation of the Internal Market and the distortions of competition caused by National governments (example: origin labelling, FOP schemes), and to go ahead with resolution and determination towards harmonization.
2. **FARM TO FORK STRATEGY.** The COVID-19 emergency will have a huge impact on the economy and on the life of citizens. The economic damages to the EU economy will be significant and will lead to recession. In order to build the proper conditions for a prompt recovery, we call the European Commission to **reframe the Farm to Fork strategy**, which, ideally, could become an instrument to include the pillars of the reboot of the food sector.
To this extent it would be necessary to follow a balanced approach without any discrimination for specific sectors and with the establishment of mechanisms of support for the food processing sector. A **Common Food Policy** based on a **strong Internal Market** and on the **possibility to face market imbalances also for the food processing sector** would be an essential instrument to be included in the Farm to Fork strategy to facilitate a restart of the economic sustainability of the European food supply chain.

World pollution has decreased by 50% during this emergency while farming animals are keeping their normal life cycle. Consequently, the debate around the impact of the livestock sector needs to be reconsidered.

3. **RECOGNITION OF THE MEAT PROCESSING SECTOR IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN**. While the main messages conveyed by public authorities are underlining the role of farmers and retailers, there is a lack of knowledge of the efforts carried on by processors. We urge to raise the awareness on the role of the processors in maintain the efficiency of the food supply chain without significant shortages which could have dramatic consequences for citizens.

For any additional information, please contact the Secretariat of CLITRAVI.

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