Geopa position on SACURIMA policy recommendations

SACURIMA COST action is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology, allowing the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. The main goal of this COST Action is to reduce the burden of work-related deaths, injuries and illnesses in agriculture. Sacurima now calls for policy change in the Revised CAP for Agriculture. For this reason, SACURIMA has presented five policy recommendations:

1- Update CAP objectives to include risk management as a 10th objective of the CAP and integrate OSH in all current and future agricultural policies

2- Establish a European network for agricultural safety and health

3- Allocate specific funding for agricultural safety, health and well-being research in Horizon 2020 / Horizon Europe.

4- Develop/ Implement a safety, health and well-being risk assessment, education and skills program for primary producers, including self-employed farmers, family members, workers and students in agricultural schools.

5- Improve Eurostat and national statistics to reflect the true incidence and severity of agricultural workplace death, injury and ill-health.

Regarding these five policy recommendations, Geopa-Copa members replied:

1. Better health and safety conditions at work are desired, but any form of conditionality that would link CAP funds to Health and Safety regulations is unacceptable. Improvements in health and safety have to happen through an incentives framework (e.g. tax incentives or smaller social security contributions if particular goals are reached) and not through penalties. The latter might put EU farmers in an even more delicate situation regarding competitiveness, considering that EU agriculture already has the strictest standards in agricultural production. Moreover better health and safety conditions do not depend exclusively on farmers and employers. Manufacturers have also an important role to play in ensuring a continual improvement in the safety of their products.

2. The creation of a European Network for Agricultural Safety and Health will allow for the sharing of best-practices and to understand why some countries have managed to reduce the number of accidents and occupational diseases more than others.

3. Austria, Czech Republic and France support the allocation of funding for research dedicated to health and safety in agriculture through H2020. Denmark believes that these resources should be focused on supporting the transition to a climate neutral agriculture sector.

4. The implementation of programmes regarding safety, health and well-being risk assessment, education and skills are most welcomed, as long as they do not imply a bigger administrative burden on the employers. More public support should be given to the sector regarding this type of programmes because in the majority of the countries it is up to the employers to provide and pay training for the employees. This could be in the form of free training classes,
technological investments and support through scrapping of old agricultural machinery and equipment.

5. The improvement of statistical data is needed and supported. This can lead to a better appreciation of reality and will allow for better policy responses.