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## ***PRESS RELEASE***

### **Mandelson must get his facts right on biofuels, says COPA-COGECA**

Brussels. European farm leaders reacted strongly to Commissioner Mandelson's statement that the EU should open itself to imports of cheap biofuels on the basis of environmental considerations, made at a European conference on biofuels on 5 July.

"Mandelson must get his facts right on biofuels. You can only call for biofuel imports from low cost producers on environmental grounds, if you completely close your eyes to the economic realities in these countries", said the Secretary General of COPA-COGECA, Mr. Pekka PESONEN.

The international cost advantage of for example Brazilian production is based firmly on cheap land, won by destruction of rainforests and pristine savannahs, and exploitation of workers even to the point of using slave labour. EU biofuel production on the other hand reduces European CO2 emissions and is also governed by some of the highest standards for environmental sustainability in the world.

"Mandelson must understand that biofuels policy is also about promoting EU energy independence. No one says that the EU should seal itself from imports. But rejecting out of hand, as Mandelson does, the contribution European farmers can make to meeting the EU's energy needs in a sustainable way, is something to be expected from a Brazilian minister for exports for example, not the EU's Trade Commissioner", the Secretary General concluded.

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