Agri-food supply chain “societally-critical”

Copa-Cogeca, Primary Food Processors, and FoodDrinkEurope welcome the recognition that the agri-food supply chain is considered to be a “societally-critical” sector in the EU’s “Save Gas for a Safe Winter” initiative, which was endorsed by EU Member States on 26 July 2022.

As EU Member States decided to reduce gas demand by 15% next winter in the context of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they agreed they should prioritise measures that do not affect protected customers, such as households and essential services for the functioning of society such as critical entities like food production (including food, drink and pet food).

Indeed, any disruption to the gas supply would prevent food and feed producers from operating farms and manufacturing plants at full capacity. This would impact the availability and affordability of agricultural commodities, food and drinks supplied to consumers and feed for animals, with a serious risk of shortages.

Following the agreement among Member States at EU level, the agri-food sector organisations call on the EU Member States to recognise the agri-food chain as a critical sector in their national emergency plans and ensure that entities critical for food production (including packaging) are not decoupled from the grid in case of shortages. Equally, European agri-food value chain operators

remain committed to continue improving the energy efficiency of their operations.