



**XLII CONGRESS**  
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**COPENHAGEN, Denmark**

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## **WELCOME SPEECH**

**Jørn Dalby**

**President of the Danish Sugar Beet Growers' Association, DKS**

Ladies and Gentlemen  
Dear colleagues

On behalf of the Danish Beet Growers' Association it is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the International Confederation of European Beet Growers, CIBE.

I am very pleased to see so many of you here at the Congress.

I warmly welcome you here to Copenhagen, our beautiful capital. We have chosen to place the Congress here in the heart of the city and it should give all of you and your accompanying persons a chance to get a glimpse of our capital. I hope the city will show you its most attractive side.

The last time a CIBE Congress was held in Copenhagen was in 1978. I do not think many of you attended that congress 31 years ago, and a lot has changed since then – especially during the last few years.

We have gone through many changes since we met at the last CIBE Congress in Krakow 3 years ago. The reform of the European sugar market regulation has affected all of us in a serious way. Sugar production has gone down by 30 %, the number of sugar producing countries and the amount of sugar beet growers has been reduced significantly. The same has happened with the price of sugar and sugar beet.

It has indeed been a hard time and it is today more important than ever for us to stand together in CIBE and face the challenges together. So, as I said, a lot has changed since we met here in Copenhagen 31 years ago, but one thing is still the same – CIBE is just as important for us today as it was back then. CIBE unites all of us beet growers here in Europe.

In the next two and a half days we will have a lot of hard work to do here in this room. We will have the privilege of having a lot of first-rate speakers who will give us their opinions and present excellent reports on European and world sugar. All the information we will be given here will provide us with sound knowledge as a basis to be able to rise to the challenges of the future.

The last day of the Congress we will go outside of Copenhagen to have a closer look at the Danish landscape, agriculture and sugar beet research. Agriculture has always played an important role in Denmark. Almost 2/3 of the area in Denmark is used for agriculture and 2/3 of our agricultural production goes for export. We are for that reason highly dependent on trade and good international relations.

We have a long tradition of co-operatives in the agricultural sector in Denmark, and almost all of our companies in the agricultural business are co-operatives. There is only one major exception to this – and that is sugar!

Before I finish I would like to give a warm welcome to the CIBE Honorary President, Mr Erik Thiesen, and the CIBE President, Mr Jos van Campen, as well as the CEFS President, Mr Johann Marihart. I would also like to welcome our special guests, His Excellency, Dr Patrick Gomes, Guyanas Ambassador to Belgium and President of the ACP Sugar Group, Mr Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, Head of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, at the European Commission. Mr Gerrit van Dijk, President of Cogeca, Mr Toby Cohen, Director, Czarnikow Group, Mr Jens Nyholm Thomsen, General Director, Nordic Beet Research and Ms Suzanne Langguth, Director of Food Quality and General Consumer Policy, at Suedzucker. Unfortunately Mr Pekka Pesonen, General Secretary of Copa-Cogeca is unable to be with us today because of the farmers' action that Copa-Cogeca is organising for the 22<sup>nd</sup> June. Mrs Dominique Dejonckheere, Senior Policy Advisor at Copa-Cogeca in charge of Sugar and Biofuels has kindly accepted to take his place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors Nordic Sugar, Maribo Seed, Danske Markets, Nordea, KWS, Syngenta and Strube. Without the sponsors it would be a very difficult task for a small organisation like the Danish Beet Growers to host an event like this. Thank you very much for your contributions.

I am delighted and honoured to host the 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the International Confederation of European Beet Growers and I hope the Congress will be a successful one.

Ladies and Gentlemen I thank you all for coming and once again welcome you to Copenhagen.