

# NewsletterCEPM

LES DERNIÈRES NOUVELLES DE LA PRODUCTION EUROPÉENNE DE MAÏS • THE LATEST NEWS IN EUROPEAN MAIZE PRODUCTION



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## BIOFUELS : THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TAKES THE WRONG PATH (p.2)

### > Editorial

#### **What clarity for European farmers when strategic policies go in such different directions?**

Starting off with glyphosates, the Commission played it cool in the face of political opposition from certain Member States by waiting for the voice of science through the European Chemicals Agency. Thus, it was confirmed that glyphosates are not carcinogenic! Though it will still be necessary to repeat the approval procedure in order to authorize the product for a 15-year period.

At the same time, on the issue of neonicotinoids—and without so much as analyzing the call for data launched after the moratorium—the Commission proposes an extension of the moratorium on the basis of an EFSA report which applied invalid political reasoning without giving firms a sufficient chance to address their concerns...

Yes, the farmers need Europe and indeed are European. But it is time that this Europe became more transparent and encouraged production, particularly by taking decisions based on science and not on political bargaining.

And it is not clear that the proposals for comitology reform resolve this equation...!

**Daniel Peyraube,**  
**CEPM President,**  
**AGPM President**

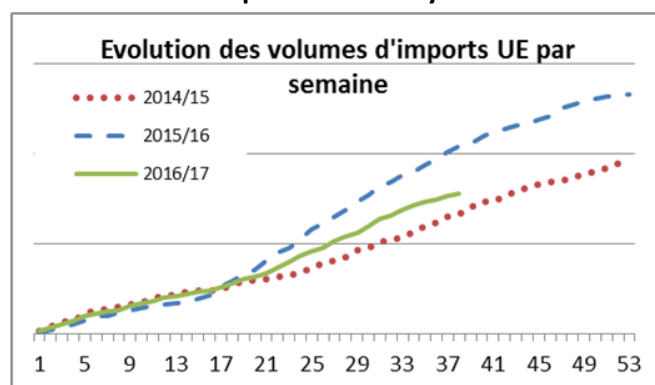


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### KEY MAIZE FIGURES:

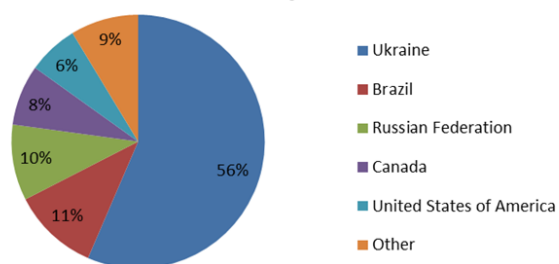
#### EU import volumes by week



Source: DG agri – 2017

#### Origins of EU imports 2016/17

##### Répartition des origines des imports UE en 2016/17\*



\*du 01/07/2016 au 21/03/2017

Source: DG agri – 2017 – Traitement AGPM

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## FIRST GENERATION BIOFUELS : THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TAKES THE WRONG PATH

Public opinion ought to be taken into account, even when it is wrong. Sounds absurd? This is nonetheless the approach of the European Commission with its proposal for a new Renewable Energy Directive (“RED 2”), published 30 November 2016.

### An unjustified attack on first generation biofuels

During a dinner at the European Parliament in October 2016 the Director of DG Energy at the Commission, Marie Donnelly, declared: *“We cannot just base our actions on economic models and scientific theories [...] we should be sensitive to citizens’ concerns, even if they are sometimes based more on emotions than on facts or science”*. Thus, first generation (G1) biofuels made from products like maize have been perceived negatively by the public, as contributing to global food scarcity. The Commission bases itself on this dogmatic and erroneous perception of G1 biofuels in proposing a reduction in their maximum share from 7% in 2020 to 3.8% in 2030. No scientific facts whatsoever justify this cap, which threatens 50,000 industrial and agricultural jobs, not to mention the investments made over the course of the past ten years.

### G1 biofuels sacrificed for a G2 which is not yet ready!

G1 biofuels are thus being sacrificed to the benefit of supposedly “advanced” second generation biofuels (G2). Yet these fuels are categorically not ready to take up the baton, and will not be until 2025 at the earliest. **Reduced G1 therefore means reduced efforts in reducing CO2 emissions from transport before 2030**, making a nonsense of economic and environmental targets thanks to the European Commission’s poor analysis and comprehension of the matter. The Commission is now bordering absurdity with its Renewable Energy Directive doing precisely the opposite of what it says on the tin by promoting fossil fuels!



### G1 biofuels: The basis for a credible and ambitious RED 2

Contrary to the present tendency, the EU should be more ambitious with G1 biofuels in order to meet the objectives established at the COP21 to reach 27% renewable energy and a 40% gas reduction by 2030. Instead of capping G1 biofuel shares at 3.8%, the Commission should fully support them, as one of the major tools of the bio-based economy, and falling within the objectives of a circular economy via a symbiosis with bioethanol co-products for the agri-foods sector (human and animal foods, CO2). A real policy of CO2 reduction should be put in place, **aiming at 15% renewable energy in transport of which at least 7% should be G1**, with the possibility for each Member State to revise the specifics in the interests of particular investments and in order to develop the bio-based economy and circular economy with European raw materials.

### Placing science back at the heart of European politics

Instead of basing policy on opinions it knows to be false, as is here plainly the case, the European Commission ought to provide an example by basing itself on reliable scientific and economic expertise. The role of the Commission is to act in the general interest and so to inform citizens on the basis of objective studies. This is what impact studies and consultations are for. Impact studies are not made to artificially support decisions made in advance, as was the case for G1 biofuels. The legitimate concerns of citizens should not be ignored but analyzed and justified point by point by the Commission, such that science is placed back at the heart of the system, where it belongs.

It is with the aim of placing science and facts back at the heart of the debate that the CEPM has initiated a range of meetings with MEPs and national advisors in March.

## TRADE POLICY: HELPING UKRAINE TO THE DETRIMENT OF EU FARMERS?

In September 2016 the College of Commissioners adopted a draft regulation on the introduction of trade measures favoring Ukraine in 8 agricultural products. This move supplements the trade concessions made as part of the EU's Association Agreement with Ukraine, and in particular grants a zero-duty quota for 650 kt of maize from 2017.

### A SUPERFLUOUS AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE INITIATIVE

This proposal forms part of the economic support offered to Ukraine, which is currently at war with Russia, with a view to injecting funds directly into Ukraine's agricultural production. From the CEPM's perspective, this initiative is potentially pertinent to other products on the Commission's proposed list, but is absolutely not in the case of maize. In effect:

- **The EU's maize market is largely open to Ukrainian exports already:** The EU has a structural deficit in maize production (importing some 13 Mt per annum on average across the past 4 crop years), and has already offered various market access concessions to third country imports during WTO and bilateral negotiations, including a zero-duty quota for Ukraine covering 400 kt (and 650 kt by 2021) under the framework of the association agreement.
- **Ukraine is the EU's top provider of maize,** representing more than 60% of its imports. Ukraine benefits greatly from the increase in the EU's import demand, as well as from the concessions granted to it. Today, it is the most competitive exporter of maize to the EU in the world: competitive pricing, freight costs etc.
- The concession of further duty-free quotas will be **destructive to EU maize producers:** Ukraine has no need of supplementary quotas to be competitive. By contrast, this quota would create added pressure on internal market prices and a reduction in the rates paid to EU maize producers, all in a sector already in deep crisis. This would accentuate the EU's production deficit and accelerate the trend towards reliance on maize imports. Is this really the desired outcome?

### CEPM MOBILIZES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

This is why **CEPM is mobilizing before MEPs in the European Parliament's agricultural commission (COMAGRI) and international affairs commission (COMINTA)** ahead of debates.

On 26 January 2017, during an exchange of views between a Commission representative and COMAGRI deputies, the text's rapporteur Mr Walesa shared his intention to **remove maize and wheat from the list of products covered by the additional quotas**, taking up the arguments outlined above. The adoption of this courageous and coherent stance shows the strong desire of certain MEPs to find alternative solutions that allow the EU to support Ukrainian producers without penalizing EU farmers. However, if the COMAGRI deputies have shown their support for this amendment on 1 March, the majority of COMINTA deputies remain to be convinced in the run up to the vote on 4 May. Indeed, certain amendments proposed by other MEPs seek to maintain the current quotas and even envision increasing them! **These amendments seriously endanger EU corn production, a sector already currently in crisis, and all in order to favor Ukrainian producers who are already highly competitive and present in the EU market.**

Pending the vote in COMINTA and the plenary session in May, a further proposal from COMAGRI's president Mr Siekierski merits investigation: **the organization of a public hearing (or perhaps even a study tour) on Ukrainian agriculture**, with the goal of finding means to support it in a more balanced way. CEPM will remain at COMAGRI's disposal with a view to providing its expertise on EU and third country agriculture, and to participate in the debate surrounding the development of solutions to support Ukrainian agriculture in a way which does not endanger EU agriculture.

## GMOS, GLYPHOSATES AND PESTICIDES: CHANGES COMING TO COMITOLOGY PROCEDURES?

On 14 February, the European Commission presented its reform of “comitology”, the opaque and complex procedures which are used to decide, among other things, the authorization of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and of phyto-pharmaceutical products (PPP).

At the EU level, the Parliament and Council adopt directives and regulations, and the Commission is responsible for implementing them via “secondary legislation”. This legislation includes “delegated acts” and “implementing acts”. Implementing acts are carried out by a committee (the process is called “comitology”) composed of 28 national experts. **The meetings are held behind closed door and the vote of the experts is kept secret.**

### Comitology, at the heart of the most controversial measures

These comitology procedures make life difficult for the Commission when **the Member States are unable to reach a qualified majority (neither for nor against a proposal)**. A recent example illustrates the problem: on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Commission presented two implementing acts to the relevant comitology committee, one to re-authorize Monsanto’s maize GMO (MON810), and another to authorize the use of two additional varieties of GMO (1507 and Bt11).

The vote failed to secure a qualified majority for these authorizations, with the result being neither for nor against them in a case of “no opinion”. In this situation, and after passing through an “Appeals Committee”, the Commission can adopt the implementing act (but is not obliged to do so). Thus, due to the secrecy of these procedures, **the Commission finds itself the only actor with the responsibility to adopt controversial measures**. In 2015–2016 this kind of situation came up 17 times, enough for the executive to propose a reform.

### Proposals with major consequences

**Four changes** are proposed by the Commission:

- To no longer count abstentions in calculating qualified majorities, denying states the ability to defer responsibility, forcing a Yes or No vote.

- To make the individual Members States’ votes public.
- In the event of an abstention at the level of the Appeals Committee, the creation of two possibilities for the Commission:
  - o To organize a second ministerial level round.
  - o To obtain a non-binding opinion from the Council on which to base its arbitration.

### What are the consequences for the CEPM?

**This reform might seem minor or technical but its consequences could prove crucial for matter of great importance to the CEPM, such as GMOs and phyto-pharmaceutical products.**

Glyphosates have, for example, gone through a meandering saga of comitology, ending in June 2016 with a temporary extension of its authorization on the market until December 2017, when the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) can give its opinion. However, if the procedural regime proposed by the Commission was already in practice, glyphosates’ entry into the market could have been fully authorized once it had passed the Appeals Committee stage.

### For the Member States, this seems like making a rod for their own backs...

However, the proposal to reform comitology will need the green light from the Council and the Parliament. It is hard to imagine national governments willfully renounce a scapegoat as convenient as “Brussels” in areas as controversial as GMOs and PPPs.

Ultimately, by pushing Member States to take their share in the responsibility for controversial measures, the Commission has perhaps simply sown the seeds of a comprehensive inter-institutional quarrel.

**What’s the science behind all this?** Implementing acts are technical in nature, not political. Science should be at the center of the decisions taken under comitology. This is at least the argument that a group of 18 organizations published in a [press release](#) on 13<sup>th</sup> February, including COPA-COGECA, ESA and EuropaBio. Unfortunately, their call has not been heard, since above all, the reform aims to further politicize these measures.



## WHAT NEXT FOR THE CAP?

Launched on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017, a public consultation is giving all stakeholders the chance to express themselves on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) before the development of formal legislative proposals in one year. However, we should not neglect the adjustments to the current CAP behind environmental “greening” politics and overall simplification.

### POST-2020 CAP: UNDER CONSTRUCTION

During a press conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017, the Commissioner Phil Hogan announced the **launch of a consultation published on the future of the CAP after 2020**. Composed of 33 questions, this consultation is open to everyone until 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. At the same time, the Commission launched its impact analysis of the post-2020 CAP reform. The impact analysis and public consultation will be followed by a public conference in July 2017. **The CEPM intends on seizing all of these opportunities to make heard the voice of European maize producers in the definition of the future CAP.**

This participatory process will culminate in the Commission’s publication of a **Communication on the future of the CAP between September and November 2017**. The legislative proposals (Directives and/or Regulations) should follow at the start of 2018.

At the same time, co-legislators are starting to debate this issue, engaging in an exchange of views at the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017. MEPs in COMAGRI are also starting to engage with the topic, **though their role will not be truly significant until the Commission publishes its legislative proposals** at the start of 2018.

However, other factors will have a crucial influence on the process:

- First, there is the reform of the Commission’s **post-2020 Multiannual financial framework (MFF)**, which should be published before the end of 2017. The MFF determines the budget allocated to the CAP, which is of course essential to know before publishing the post-2020 CAP legislative proposals at the start of 2018.
- The **numerous upcoming elections** in Europe over the course of 2017 (in France, Germany, the Netherlands), 2018 (Ireland...) and 2019 (Poland, Denmark, Belgium, European Parliament...)
- The **uncertainties tied to the opening of Brexit proceedings**, which officially began on 29th March.

**An evaluation of the viability of EU food production** is also expected to be launched in March 2017 and concluded in June 2018 in order to deepen the CAP’s contributions to farmers’ salaries, as well as market competitiveness and stability. **This evaluation will be accompanied by a public consultation from January to March 2018, in which CEPM will also contribute.**

### WHAT ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE CAP BEFORE 2020?

Various initiatives have been launched in parallel, notably on environmental “greening” policies. The Commission adopted its **delegated acts project on greening** on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017. As a reminder, this proposal, which notably regulates the use of pesticides on ecological focus areas (EFAs), was criticized by Member States and civil society in September 2016. COMAGRI MEPs were also very harsh on the Commission’s proposal, both in terms of its substance and contents, extending the deadline in which a veto could be expressed by 2 months.

DG AGRI’s greening unit is not sitting idle either: on 29<sup>th</sup> March it confirmed that the **proportion of EFA on arable land will be maintained at 5%** instead of being raised to 7%, as certain stakeholders had feared. This issue will also be taken up at Council of Ministers on the 3<sup>rd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> April 2017. Moreover, **a study on the costs and administrative burden of greening** (forthcoming), should be completed by November 2017.

Finally, in May 2017, COMAGRI will vote on the agricultural section of the Omnibus Regulation, on the basis of amendments tabled by the rapporteur de Castro and his colleagues. They relate, in particular, to the insurance angle (reducing the thresholds for activation from 30 to 20%), but also to greening and the Common Organization of Agricultural Markets. Commissioner Hogan has shown himself to be critical of COMAGRI’s ambitions, however, and might press more increased moderation.

## MAIZE AND IRRIGATION IN THE EU : DECONSTRUCTING CONVENTIONAL WISDOM

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, the UN's "World Water Day" took place, which we are taking as an opportunity to address the essential question of the relationship between agriculture and water, and the problems of water quality and quantity which European farmers face. Two years ahead of the revision of the Water Frameworks Directive, this is also an occasion to consider its regulatory aspects.

### IRRIGATION IN THE EU AND FOR MAIZE

11% of the EU's agricultural land is irrigable, while 6% is actually irrigated. In central and northern Europe, irrigation is used as a supplementary boost to agricultural production during dry summers. In such regions, farmers are often confronted with problems of water quality (the presence of nitrates, phosphorous, pesticides). By contrast, the southern EU relies more heavily and systematically on irrigation owing to its climate.

#### **Maize as a systematically irrigated crop, myth or reality?**

Maize covers over 8.5% of the EU's agricultural territory, and reflects the north/south dichotomy with great variability in irrigation levels between countries, concentrated in the south. Contrary to conventional wisdom, in most EU countries that produce maize, **less than 10% of the land set aside for maize is irrigated.**

One of CEPM's objectives is thus to fight against such conventional wisdom and **inform the public about the realities of maize irrigation.** In the run-up to the revision of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), this educational mission is essential.

### THE REVISION OF THE WFD AND OF CAP: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Adopted in 2000, the WFD was revolutionary in its unification of water standards. DG ENVI has been evaluating the results of the second management plan for river basins submitted by the Member States since the start of 2017. The results of the study are expected by the Spring of 2018 and they will feed into **the discussion surrounding the revision of the WFD in 2019.** Other studies are also ongoing regarding questions of economics and governance.

The parallel revision of the CAP will make **collaboration necessary between the Commissioner for the Environment, Vella, and the Commissioner for Agriculture, Hogan,** along with the wider services under their authority. Indeed, the agricultural sector is not only one of the largest consumers of water, but is also directly affected by several major pillars of the WFD: the Nitrates Directive, the Pesticides Directive etc. In addition, the financing of water storage is foreseen under the second pillar of the CAP. The CEPM is also very attentive to the work initiated by the Commission on the re-use of urban water, an interesting potential water source for irrigation.

In the preparatory work for these regulations, the CEPM must defend a concrete and realistic vision, which recognizes farmers' experience and values the efforts already made towards investment and researching innovative solutions.

## Save the date

In Autumn 2017, CEPM is organizing a conference on the future of neonicotinoids in Europe, between the precautionary principle and scientific innovation.

More information forthcoming in the coming editions of the CEPM newsletter!



## CEPM and member organizations' meetings

### 3rd semester 2017

- ✓ **Civil Dialogue Groups :**
  - **3 May 2017:** CAP CDG
  - **5 May 2017 :** Arable crops CDG
  - **19 May 2017 :** Direct payments and greening CDG
  - **9 June 2017 :** Environment and climate change CDG
- ✓ **CEPM :**
  - **28 June 2017:** General Assembly and Board of Directors - Paris.
- ✓ **Germany :**
  - **23-24 May 2017:** 1st French-German Maize Breeders School on "Genetic diversity in maize breeding programmes" - Stuttgart-Hohenheim
  - **18-19 July 2017:** Working Group Plant Protection - Braunschweig
  - **5-6 September 2017:** European Maize Meeting on "Quality management of the silage maize harvesting process – from field to farm" - Haus Riswick
- ✓ **Romania :**
  - **16-19 May 2017:** participation « APPR PERTENER TECHNIQUE » at the agricultural fair DLG AGRIPLANTA
  - **30 May-2 June 2017:** APPR study trip in Poland



### CEPM Members

GERMANY – *Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)*

BULGARIA - *National Grain Producers Association (NGPA)* and the *Council of Agricultural Organizations*

SPAIN - *Asociación General de Productores de Maíz de España (AGPME)*

FRANCE – *Association Générale des Producteurs de Maïs (AGPM)*

HUNGARY – *Vetömag Szövetség Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktanács (VSZT)*

ITALY - *Associazione Italiana Maiscoltori (AMI)*

POLAND – *Polski Związek Producentów Kukurydzy (PZPK)*

PORTUGAL – *ANPROMIS*

ROMANIA - *Association Roumaine des Producteurs de Maïs (APPR)*

SLOVAKIA - *Zväz pestovateľ'ov a spracovateľ'ov kukurice (ZPSK)*



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