

Newsletter CEPM

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



CEPM
maiz'EUROP'

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Plant protection products: Emotion trumps fact! (p.2)

> Editorial

Producing tomorrow's maize

European producers are ready. Because climate change needs to be taken into account. Because public expectations need to be met. Because maize has many assets to exploit.

But we need to be allowed to produce, to create value and income for maize growers. We need to be granted access to certain agricultural inputs for production to satisfy the quality and quantity criteria. This includes plant protection products like glyphosate, neonicotinoids and so many others, which are real medicines for plants. This also includes access to breeding innovations, which entails whenever possible lower use of water, fertilisers or plant protection products.

While the large-scale consultation on the CAP focusses on the need to pursue both economic and environmental goals, EU maize producers are up to the challenge, provided they are allowed to act on scientific and factual bases.

A dogmatic approach can only lead us to failure and absurdity, as is the case with GMOs today: their import is largely authorised, but we are not allowed to produce them!

Daniel Peyraube,
CEPM President,
AGPM President



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KEY MAIZE FIGURES:

GMOs around the world in 2016:

+3% acreage and 26 countries

In 2016, the global acreage covered by genetically modified plants increased to 185.1 million hectares, representing a 3% increase compared to 2015.

Across the world, 26 countries grow genetically modified plants, including 19 developing countries and 7 industrialised countries. The USA, Brazil, Argentina, Canada and India are the main producers of GMOs.

GMOs in the EU in 2016:

+17% acreage and 4 countries

Four European countries (mainly Spain, but also Portugal, Czech Republic and Slovakia) grew more than 136,000 hectares of genetically modified maize in 2016, representing a 17% increase compared to 2015.

Source: International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), 2017.

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PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS: EMOTION TRUMPS FACT

Arable crops are confronted with a series of especially important files at the EU level which are up for decision at the same time.

With no particular order, let us list neonicotinoids, NBTs, and endocrine disruptors. All these files have three things in common: We may cite the examples of glyphosate, neonicotinoids, NBTs and endocrine disruptors. All these files have three things in common:

- They are presented in a negative way for agricultural stakeholders,
- They follow a particularly complex decision-making system,
- They illustrate how NGOs are dominating the debate at the expense of stakeholders.

The example of glyphosate in this regard is telling. After long studies, the European Food Safety Authority and the European Chemicals Agency both concluded that glyphosate was not carcinogenic. Not a surprising result, given that all the other global toxicological agencies (e.g. in USA, Japan, Australia) have reached the same conclusions.

But to no avail. The newspaper *Le Monde* devoted four pages to showing that Monsanto allegedly did not provide all the required information. The European Parliament got involved, and there is no guarantee that glyphosate will indeed be re-authorized for 10 years as proposed by the Commission. A question then arises: is it more important to collect the signatures of a million non-experts, or to rely on a positive scientific opinion from specialised European agencies? The question answers itself. But in reality we have the opposite: emotion trumping facts.

The situation is even worse for endocrine disruptors, where the middle-ground position adopted by the Commission is being fought resolutely by a series of NGOs justifying themselves as protecting the public interest. In reality, they are activists aiming to impose by force their vision of society, running squarely against progress, people's aspirations or the food efficiency

threshold needed to feed the global population, due to reach 10 billion inhabitants by 2050.

Neonicotinoids are also under threat and at least 3 molecules are close to being completely banned, with consequences for the maize sector.

Joining forces for persuasive and effective lobbying

But having complained in the previous paragraphs about the difficult circumstances we face, we also should analyse whether the reaction from the industry – and stakeholders in general – is up to the challenge. The answer to this blunt question is a resounding 'no'.

Industrial lobby groups are too divided. They are too defensive, acting on an *ad hoc* basis without bringing their forces together. Each lobby, each association and sub-association writes again and again to the Commission or Parliament, but in the age of modern lobbying, writing is useless. You need to convince. Join forces, mobilise support. Demonstrate with evidence, put forward proposals. After meeting with several representatives of the EU Institutions, we have the feeling that this is not the case. We have to transition from defensive lobbying to proactive lobbying. And from a communication strategy often conceived as advertisement towards a better mastery of social media – currently dominated by NGOs.

It is urgent to act. While CEPM may not be on the frontline of these files, it is mobilising with the organisation of a conference-debate in Brussels on 27 September on the future of maize production. We will highlight good practices and communicate with credibility. But it is essential to go one step further and mobilise actors on the ground, beyond their participation to public consultations.

FIRST-GENERATION BIOFUELS – THE FIGHT GOES ON!

CEPM continues the fight to save first-generation biofuels of agricultural origin like maize, while a recent study casts doubt on the scientific basis of the European Commission's proposal for a new Renewable Energies Directive (RED2).

RED2 impact assessment: does it have the right methodology and legitimacy?

The Impact Assessment Institute, an independent organisation that assesses the quality of the preparatory documents published by the Commission ahead of its legislative proposals, used very clear language when it published its position on 19 June: the impact assessment accompanying the new Renewable Energies Directive (RED2) proposal lacks transparency, and does not provide the necessary data to justify the content. The Institutes lists the absence of models used to calculate macro-economic parameters, indirect land use change or the consequences of alternative fuel policies, which undermines the legitimacy of the study's results, and by extension of the proposal itself.

Co-legislators begin defining their position on the text

In the meantime, the Commission's proposal is still undergoing scrutiny by the co-legislators. The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in the industry (ITRE), environment (ENVI) and agriculture (AGRI) parliamentary

committees – which share competence for different parts of the text – are currently tabling their amendments (29 June for ITRE, 5 July for ENVI and 19 July for AGRI). Committee votes should be held after the summer break in September-October, and the plenary vote might take place before the end of 2017, at the December session. On the Council side, the proposal could be discussed before the summer break at working party level, and ideally talks might lead to the adoption of a general position in December 2017 too. Trilogues could then begin to reach a consensus between Parliament and Council with the help of the Commission.

CEPM strongly mobilised on the issue

CEPM is extremely active on this file, with 18 different meetings with Member States' Permanent Representations and MEPs between March and June 2017. We will remain strongly mobilised on this question which is of the utmost importance for us, throughout the decision-making process, to defend the position of the sector against the weaknesses of the Commission's proposal.

Save the date!

You are invited to a conference organised by CEPM entitled

HOW WILL WE PRODUCE MAIZE TOMORROW?

What factors hinder the competitiveness of EU maize producers? What is the reality of the daily life of a European maize grower? Are we heading towards two-speed agriculture?

On 27 September (afternoon) at the Berlaymont Hotel (11-12 Boulevard Charlemagne, Brussels).



For more information on the programme and how to register, contact cepm@pacteurope.eu

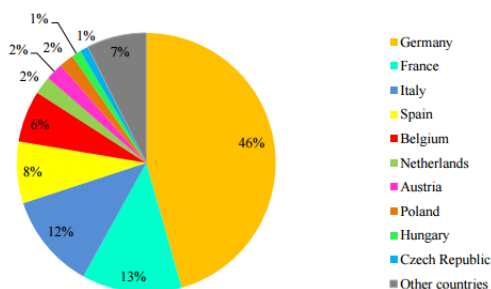
POST-2020 CAP: CAN FARMERS MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD?

Launched on 2 February, the public consultation on the future of the CAP closed on 2 May. Agricultural organisations only represent a tiny fraction of participants. In this context, what will be their place in the debate before formal legislative proposals are presented in 2018?

92.8% OF PARTICIPANTS “NOT INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURE”

The public consultation on the **post-2020 future of the CAP** was closed on 2 May 2017. The official conclusions will be presented and debated on 7 July at a conference organised by the European Commission. Official participation data are available and they lead to interesting remarks:

- **322,912 contributions** were received in total.
- The contributions are **not geographically representative of the EU:**



- More shocking is that **only 7.18% of the participants said they are involved in agricultural activities**. 92.82% of contributions therefore came from participants not involved in agriculture.

Let us hope that the voice of farmers, expressed by CEPM and its member organisations among others, will be properly taken into account by the European Commission to the extent that it reflects the reality on the ground and farmers' concrete experience.

Following the 7 July conference, this participatory process will lead to the publication by the Commission of a **Communication on the future of the CAP at some time between September and November 2017**. Legislative proposals (Directive and/or Regulation proposals) should then follow in the first half of 2018. This is at least what the Commission promised during the launch of its public consultation in February 2017.

CAP GREENING: MEPS TRY TO FIGHT AGAINST THE COMMISSION

On two separate files, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have tried to influence the on-going CAP greening policy.

First, the proposed **delegated act on greening**, published in February 2017, which regulates the use of pesticides in Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs). The veto motion against the proposal was passed in the agriculture parliamentary committee, with MEPs criticising both the content of the measure and also how it was proposed (bundling 14 texts together, with no possibility for amendment). However, the veto motion failed to gather sufficient support at the plenary session in Strasbourg on 14 June. The Commission can now publish the delegated act despite the opposition of nearly half of all MEPs (363 out of 751). It will come into force as of 1 January 2018.

The second on-going file is found in the **Omnibus Regulation** – the mid-term simplification of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 – which finds itself torn between the Commission's ambitious timeframe preventing excessive revisions, and MEPs' willingness already to launch the debate on the post-2020 MFF and include as many reforms as possible anticipating future budgetary restraints. The Omnibus proposal is horizontal and includes an agricultural chapter which was dealt with by the AGRI committee in the EP. Early in May, AGRI adopted its report on this part of the proposal, with many adjustments to the greening mechanism, e.g. revision of the definition of arable lands, harmonisation of farm surfaces thresholds for the exemptions of crop rotation and EFAs, adding short-term rotation crops. But to be effectively implemented, these EP proposals must be negotiated with the Council of Ministers in 'trilogues' beginning in July, and then formally accepted by the co-legislators. The Commission hopes for an agreement in October 2018 so that the text can enter into force as of 1 January 2018.

CONFERENCE(S) ON WATER IN VALETTA

In April-May 2017, the Maltese presidency of the Council of the EU held several informal Council summits in different formations, all centred on the common theme of water management and climate change.

On 25-26 April 2017, the **Environment Ministers** of the EU Member States were informally invited to Valetta by the Maltese presidency of the Council to have a discussion on climate change and its consequences for seas and oceans.

On [27 April 2017](#), also in Valetta, they were joined by their colleagues from other Mediterranean countries under the **Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)** to discuss water management in the Mediterranean basin in particular. The aim of this conference was to launch a UfM working group for **“enhanced regional cooperation on Water in the Mediterranean”**.

Environment Commissioner [Vella](#) launched the debate by listing key goals, such as depollution and using technological innovation to protect surface and groundwater.

On 22-23 May 2017, a **Council meeting gathering Agriculture Ministers** enabled more debate on water management (in the Mediterranean and beyond) but insisted on the perspective of farmers, with **water as an vital resource for agriculture**. The Agriculture Ministers agreed on the advantages of an **integrated approach** bringing together for instance the Commission’s DG Agriculture and DG Environment, as well as Commissioners Vella and Hogan, in a single ‘Task Force’. Ministers also recalled the **use of EFSI 2.0 strategic funds** for irrigation infrastructure and water management investments without using the CAP budget. Other projects that should be encouraged include precision agriculture, big data analysis and agricultural uses of technological innovations (e.g. satellites).

These discussions correspond to the challenges identified by CEPM members. Mobilisation on water and irrigation are among the priority issues for maize producers.

EU-MERCOSUR TRADE TALKS: MEMBER STATES URGE CAUTION

While EU-US talks seem to have halted since President Trump’s election, trade negotiations with Mercosur progress steadily with each new negotiation round, albeit too fast for a group of 11 Member States who have called for a **“break in the talks”**.

During the 27th negotiation round (the second since the re-opening of negotiations in 2016) in March 2017 in Buenos Aires, the European Commission and its Mercosur partners discussed the **“exchange of offers”** from May 2016, confirming their **mutual desire for a quick agreement**.

The negotiators must remain cautious, notably on “sensitive topics”. Issues such as sweetcorn, ethanol and beef have remained outside of negotiations so far. This question was on the agenda of the 12 June Agriculture Council meeting, where a group of 11 countries (including France) asked the Commission for a break in trade talks,, thereby allowing Member States to examine the offers exchanged with a focus on the sensitive topics, and to organise methodical and detailed technical meetings with

Member State experts. Given the difficulties caused by TTIP and CETA, this cautious approach would pave the way for a better acceptance of any future deal by both public opinion and national parliaments.

The **28th round (the third in 2016) of EU-Mercosur talks, held in Brussels from 3-7 July**, focused on sanitary/phytosanitary issues, trade defence and customs facilitation, intellectual property/geographical indications, sustainable development and state aid.

The 29th round will take place in Brasilia from 2-6 October 2017. CEPM remains mobilised given the potential impact of the agreement on sweetcorn, corn and processed products such as ethanol or starch.

Life of member organisations: AGPM visits Brussels

On 31 May, a delegation from the French General Association of Maize Producers (AGPM) composed of elected leaders and administrators came to Brussels for an **“Immersion day” with the EU Institutions**. The delegation met with French MEP Eric Andrieu, the agricultural attaché of the French Permanent Representation Virginie Jorissen, and the ‘Greening’ unit of the European Commission’s DG Agriculture. The meetings enabled the delegation to raise awareness about current key issues for the French maize sectors, and to take note of the strong demand for expertise from all EU Institutions, which are calling for more proactive participation from French and European farmers.



CEPM Members

GERMANY – *Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)*

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

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

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

HUNGARY – *Vetőmag 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)*

CEPM's members' meetings

3rd quarter 2017

- ✓ **Civil dialogue groups:**
 - **4 July 2017:** Arable Crops CDG, oil and protein crops/seeds
 - **September 2017:** International aspects of agriculture CDG
- ✓ **CEPM:**
 - **27 September 2017:** Board Meeting (morning) and conference 'Producing Maize Tomorrow' (afternoon) - Brussels.
- ✓ **France:**
 - **22-23 November 2017:** Maize Congress - Toulouse.
- ✓ **Germany:**
 - **5-6 September 2017:** European Maize Meeting.