

# Newsletter CEPM



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

N° 13 – July - September 2017

## Maize and Innovation, for better or for worse ? (p.2)

### > Editorial

#### The Glyphosate scandal

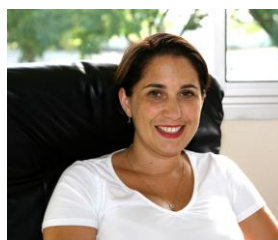
As the European machinery is launched towards a ban of this strategic molecule very soon, the scandal bursts! The biased lobbyists and scientists influenced are not the ones we believed.

This is what a Reuters journalist reveals, relayed by the Risk-Monger : IARC is actually instrumentalised by lobbies which have no more scruples - neither on the substance nor on the form – than the industries despised by our sanitised and satiated society.

When we know that IARC is the only agency that has classified the glyphosate as probable carcinogen; that this is this study (and not all those that say the contrary) that NGOs and politicians treat like a paragon of truth; and that one of the main experts of the dossier was generously paid (\$160,000!) by anti-glyphosate lawyers... this is enough to be outraged.

Farmers can't continue to be the victims of this perpetrated joke! We need glyphosate, which received a positive assessment from all the agencies of the world, starting with EFSA. Allow us to use it!

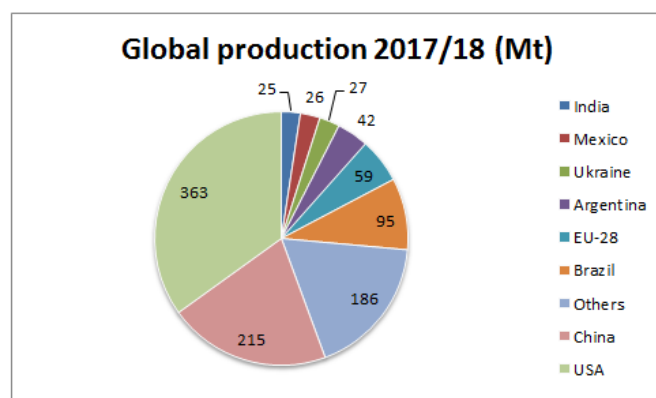
**Céline Duroc,**  
CEPM Permanent Delegate,  
AGPM Director General



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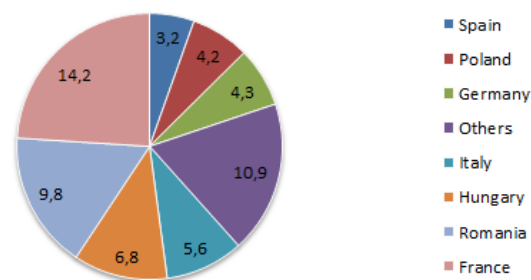
#### KEY MAIZE FIGURES :



Source: USDA, octobre 2017

Source: USDA, October 2017

#### Global production in EU-28 (Mt)



Source: USDA, October 2017

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## MAIZE AND INNOVATION, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE ?

The day after French President Macron's speech on the future of Europe, the European Confederation of Maize Production (CEPM) held a conference in Brussels on 27 September entitled "Maize and innovation, for better or for worse?", taking stock of the challenges and solutions for maize cultivation between now and 2025.

President Macron himself declared that "science must never be trumped by politics". The CEPM is in complete agreement: policies – be they national or European – must be based on science and the expertise of scientific agencies. This comes with a strong responsibility on the EU Institutions to follow the scientific opinions of their own agencies, a point illustrated by the case of glyphosate during speeches by Vicky Marissen (PACT European Affairs) and David Zaruk (Risk-Monger blog). Given the lack of public trust in the EU's agencies – propagated by certain organisations – the only solution is transparency at all levels, as well as more uniformity and clarity in procedures.

"Science must show how dangerous substances actually are, and what their alternatives are", in the words of President Macron. Any ban, to be sustainable and effective, must take into account the existence of alternatives and their potential consequences. Should there be none, policies must come with transitional measures and the possibility of national derogations. In this spirit, the CEPM chose to show to the Brussels audience the realities of the field through testimonies from Romanian and Italian maize-growers and French beet-growers, illustrating the concrete consequences of adopting bans with no prior consideration of alternatives.



The European Union is engaged in a vicious circle in which the lack of competitiveness of European farmers is

deplored, but at the same time new competitive distortions are being imposed on them, particularly through limits on access to innovation (e.g. biotechnologies, substance bans, bio-economy), all against a background of low international prices, as CEPM Permanent Delegate Céline Duroc explained. To fulfil the French President's wish that "farmers can make a living" without being "over-burdened by the EU", we need to place the innovation principle alongside the precautionary principle; let science, farmers and innovation be.



The CEPM, like President Macron, wants more Europe and a better Europe. Daniel Peyraube, CEPM President, stated it clearly: "Maize-growers are profoundly European, but they need a Europe of production, a Europe that supports its agriculture while looking to the future. The basis of this process is innovation, and for maize, this clearly is for the better!"



## FIRST-GENERATION BIOFUELS – RATHER POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS!

Following the change of position of the European Commission on commitments regarding first-generation biofuels in November 2016, the proposal is now in the hands of the co-legislators – the European Parliament and the Council - with a view of reaching a conclusion in January 2018.

In this context, during an event held at the European Parliament on 6 September, the MEP Christofer Fjellner (EPP, SE) emphasized, the lack of scientific basis in the Commission's proposal for a Directive on renewable energy, and especially on biofuels. He also criticized the Commission for having created instability on the market which, as a consequence, discourages investors who want to support the production of renewable energies: *"There is a point when your desire for making biofuels greener will make it too costly and too hard for bringing it to the market and risk making fossil fuels the real winners"*.

### A group of Member States opposing the European Commission

The Commission's proposal to substantially decrease the contribution of conventional biofuels in the energy mix in transport has resulted in numerous objections notably from Member States like Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania which are opposed to the "phasing out".

As a consequence, **on 21 September, the Visegrad Group + RO & BG published a common declaration** requesting the European Commission to reconsider its proposal of gradually phasing out first generation biofuels after 2020 and to reflect on the consequences this could entail.

The 7 States stressed the importance of the production of biofuels, and want the current level of renewable energy sources to be maintained if not increased after 2020. Furthermore, they urged the Commission to globally "analyse" its proposal and to consider maintaining the current requirements relating to the usage of food and feed crops for the production of biofuels both in EU and third countries.

**Following in the same footsteps, the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU** proposed in early October to drop the controversial limit on 1<sup>st</sup> generation biofuels. **On 9 October, the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of the Council of the EU has focused its attention on this declaration, supported by several Member States.**

### Mixed positions in the committees

At the same time, **Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI) of the EP have adopted a similar position.**

**On 4 October, the biofuels sector (AGPM, AGPB, CGB, Esterifrance, Fop, SNPAA) published a press release rightly welcoming the vote of COMAGRI** which makes it possible to highlight the benefit of using biofuels made from highly sustainable crops co-producing protein and cellulose for animal feed.

COMAGRI emphasized the importance of an objective incorporating renewable energy into transports, which it proposes to set at a minimum of 12%, whereas the Commission wanted to remove it altogether.

The Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (COMENVI) did not follow suit by voting on 23 October in favour of the phasing out of the use of biofuels by 2030.

### CEPM's strong mobilisation continues

CEPM welcomes the proposal of the Council of the EU, which sets a target of 15% for all the renewable energies in transport and recognizes the key role of 1<sup>st</sup> generation biofuels in this target.

Contrary to the COMENVI approach, these elements would send a positive signal to investors and would address the strategic interests of the EU in terms of its ambition in climate policies, as well as decreasing its dependency on imported proteins and fossil fuels.

CEPM remains very active on the subject. Meetings with the Permanent Representations and MEPs are still ongoing in order to shade light on our interests as well as the distribution of the sector's position papers in order to put forward our arguments.



## THE INTER-BRANCH ORGANISATION "SORGHUM ID" IS HERE

On Tuesday 26 September in Brussels, the Constitutive Assembly of the European inter-branch association for sorghum gave birth to Sorghum ID

Bringing together the various European sorghum stakeholders, from seeds to production and manufacturing, this Brussels meeting formally created the new organisation, with the definition of a strategic objective – develop European sorghum production (grain – silage – energy) and its hybrid genetics – and a clear action plan.



Sorghum ID is the third step of a process initiated in 2016 by professional and economic stakeholders, beginning with the organisation of the First Europe Sorghum Congress in November 2016 in Bucharest, Romania, followed by the implementation since spring 2017 of three-year promotion programmes for sorghum in various European countries, co-funded by the European Commission.



Sorghum ID has set up its own Executive Board to represent the European stakeholders involved in this sector that is still being consolidated. The Board, during its upcoming first meeting will elect a Bureau and a President for the new association.



*"Sorghum has many assets and real potential. Our ambition is to bring together European actors to develop European production of sorghum and its hybrid genetics, as well as give long-term momentum to this development, so that users and processors can benefit from a sustainable and significant push"* stated Luc Esprit, Sorghum ID Delegate, after the Brussels meeting.

## CONFERENCE ON MODERN BIOTECHNOLOGIES

The European Commission organised in Brussels on 28 September 2017 a conference on modern biotechnologies in agriculture, with the objective of encouraging responsible innovation.

Industries, farmers, researchers and consumers could all benefit from certain scientific solutions, which are already authorised and available in other countries, but in the EU the decision-making process is still ongoing, leading to a legislative grey area. This has negative consequences on – among others – the competitiveness of European research and products. This is the case of the "NBT" (New Breeding Techniques): should they fall under the legal definition of GMOs (as defended by

Greenpeace or Via Campesina) or as a broad category that should be nuanced and divided technique by technique? The consensus, as expressed by Estonian Agriculture Ministry Tarmo Tamm, is that societal and agricultural challenges should be dealt with in an open and constructive dialogue, instead of dogmatic exchanges. We are still waiting for the European Court of Justice's ruling to answer the French and German questions on the legal status of NBTs.

## EU-MERCOSUR TRADE TALKS: DIVISION AMONG MEMBER STATES

Since negotiations were resumed in 2016, discussions continue to progress. The European Commission, anxious to reach a swift agreement - and if possible by the end of the year - goes against the wishes of 11 Member States that had asked for a "break in the talks" last June.

The 29<sup>th</sup> round of EU-Mercosur negotiations, held in Brasilia from 2 to 6 October 2017, focused on the "sensitive issues" that were included by the European Commission's negotiators in the market access offer presented to Mercosur. Sensitive products were included as import tariff quotas including 600,000t of ethanol.

However, Mercosur does not seem satisfied with this proposal, recalling that the EU-15 made a commitment to improve the offers made in 2004 (100,000 t) when the negotiations were relaunched at the EU-Mercosur Summit in 2010.

But while a group of 11 Member States (Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia) views this progression as premature, 7 other Member States (Germany, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) consider that this progress was essential for the evolution of the discussion between the two parties, in particular to demonstrate the importance of these negotiations for the EU.

Following the note sent last month by the group of 11 Member States and the negative reaction of professional organizations in France (who shared their concerns with the President of the French Republic at the Agricultural Show from 4 to 6 October in Clermont-Ferrand) but also in Ireland, **the French delegation asked for a discussion on bilateral trade relations with Mercosur.**

MEPs Angélique Delahaye, Tokia Saïfi, Michel Dantin and Franck Proust (EPP, FR) said the content of the agreement should take precedence over the pace of negotiations.

On 2 October, they addressed this topic: "While the European Commission has offered Member States to open new tariff quotas, we wish to emphasize the sensitivity of agricultural products. The opening of new tariff quotas would directly threaten some European sectors already weakened by the agricultural crisis, we think in particular of beef, ethanol or even sugar".

European producers of ethanol, including the CEPM, denounce the opening of markets for imports from Brazil, which would have a very negative impact on European farmers but would also be contrary to the EU's climate and energy policy.

**The 30<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations will be held from 6 to 10 November 2017.** A 31<sup>st</sup> round could be held in early December before the Ministerial Conference of WTO in Buenos Aires, taking place from 11 to 14 December 2017.

Despite the willingness of both parties to finalize the agreement by the end of the year, it would appear to be more of a symbolic deadline, especially with the elections in Brazil scheduled in October 2018, which will probably block any negotiations.

Finally, on 11 October, **French President Emmanuel Macron echoed the MEPs' statement during a speech on agriculture at the Rungis market (Essone, France). He declared that France was hostile to any "hastiness" in these negotiations that rely upon a mandate that was given in 1999. According to him, it is "essential that these negotiations be updated if we want to continue them".** He therefore wished to discuss the subject at the European Council taking place during the second half of October.

## CAP accused of dumping in the United States

In July 2017, the United States Department of Commerce initiated an investigation into the imposition of anti-dumping duties on the importation into the United States of Spanish table olives, accusing the CAP as a whole of illegal subsidies allowing for the practice of below the market prices. The case of olives, if confirmed, could trigger a domino effect on all other European agricultural products, and is therefore taken very seriously in Brussels. In an exchange of views with the European Parliament's AGRI Committee on 10 October, the European Commission reaffirmed its strong involvement in this issue: two letters have already been sent to U.S. Commerce Secretary Mr Ross, even though the final decision is to be issued in March 2018.

## Glyphosate – towards a 5-year renewal ?

On 24 October, Members of the European Parliament adopted in plenary session a non-binding resolution calling the Commission to ban the agricultural use of glyphosate after 15 December 2020 (meaning a 3-year extension from the current expiry date of the authorization, on 15 December 2017). The following day, Member States representatives meeting in the Standing Committee (SCoPAFF) did not reach an agreement on the Commission's proposal to renew the approval of the substance for a 10-year term. Indeed, qualified majority requires 55% of Member States representing 65% of the European population, but the opposition of France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Slovenia, Malta, Sweden and Croatia, as well as the abstention of Germany and Portugal, did not allow reaching the needed qualified majority threshold.

The European Commission considers gradually reducing the duration of the proposed renewal until the qualified majority is reached, informally assessing support for a 7 or even 5-year renewal by SCoPAFF. The following vote in SCoPAFF on a new Commission proposal for a 5-year renewal, on 9 November, did not reach qualified majority either. The next step will be the Appeal Committee, probably before the end of November.

As a reminder, glyphosate – initially produced by Monsanto but in the public domain since 2000 – is a substance used in herbicides and which was declared as non-carcinogenic by the two EU agencies: EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) and ECHA (Europeans Chemical Agency). Its market authorization initially expired in 2016 but was extended by 18 months in order to obtain the opinion of ECHA, which in the end considered the substance not to be classified as Carcinogenic, Mutagenic and Reprotoxic (CMR).



### CEPM MEMBERS

GERMANY – *Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)*

BULGARIA - *National Grain Producers Association (NGPA) et Conseil des Organisations Agricoles*

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 pestovateľov a spracovateľov kukurice (ZPSK)*

### CEPM's members' meetings - 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2017

- ✓ **France :**
  - **November 22-23 :** Maïz'Europ Maize Congress - Toulouse
- ✓ **Germany :**
  - **October 25:** Straw and stubble management, Karlsruhe; lectures and field demonstrations of machinery
  - **November 12-18:** Agritechnica, Hannover, DMK hall 8, B18
  - **November 20 and 21:** Board meeting and Annual Meeting, Bremen
- ✓ **Bulgaria :**
  - **November 30 – December 1st :** National Agro Seminar 2017, NGPA - Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- **Agenda of the Civil Dialogue Groups:**
  - ✓ **October 12 :** CDG ARABLE CROPS - COP + SEEDS
  - ✓ **October 18 :** CDG IAA
  - ✓ **November 22 :** CDG ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
  - ✓ **December 8 :** CDG ARABLE CROPS - COP + Flax & Hemp
  - ✓ **December 11 :** CDG CAP
  - ✓ **December 13 :** CDG ARABLE CROPS : SUGAR/RICE