



## Janusz Wojciechowski's hearing (p.2)

### > Editorial – In favour of real competition

In its international trade relations, the European Union has perfected the art of sabotaging itself. This is even truer in agriculture, where distortions already began in 1962! It was at this time that the EEC – in order to be authorized by the GATT (the ancestor of the WTO) to create the common grain market - granted to the USA (and the main operators) the right to export without duties cereal substitutes (soybean meal, corn gluten feed). This supposedly minor concession has totally destabilized European agriculture as a whole. The proliferation of free trade agreements - recently the CETA and MERCOSUR - improved access to the EU market for primary agricultural products, thereby increasing the existing strains on domestic prices, going as far as to turn certain sectors – which had hitherto been net exporters - into importers.

For the agricultural world, these concessions without any direct counterpart and without time limit are aggravated by a series of competition distortions on the modes of production. While the EU is imposing more and more constraints on crop rotation, irrigation, seeds, treatments, and so on, our foreign competitors are totally free to export to the European market products sown, cultivated and harvested under conditions banned in the EU!

This double punishment seems to be accepted as inevitable, by everyone but farmers, because no one - not even the green NGOs, so demanding elsewhere - seems to question the terms. No one? Not quite. At the end of the G7 summit in Biarritz, President Macron shared his concern on this situation and declared himself eager to restore a more balanced competition. This is an essential issue because no real reform of the CAP will be possible without holding imports to the same sanitary and phyto-sanitary rules imposed on our producers. And we can hope that the next Commission, via the Green Deal brought by its President, will put this topic at the top of the agenda.

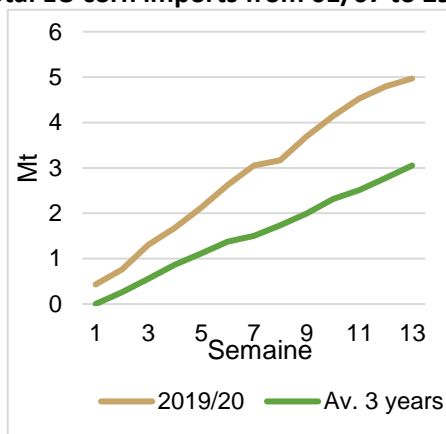
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### Summary

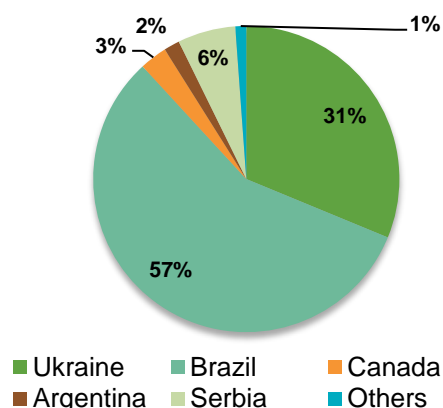
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### KEY FIGURES :

Total EU corn imports from 01/07 to 29/09



Origin of EU corn imports from 01/07 to 29/09



## COMAGRI HOLDS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR JANUSZ WOJCIECHOWSKI

**The new President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen presented her team of candidate Commissioners in mid-September. Who is the candidate she proposes to succeed to the Irishman Phil Hogan?**

The first Polish candidate, Krzysztof Szczerski, having withdrawn his candidacy when given the proposed agricultural portfolio, the name of his compatriot Janusz Wojciechowski was put forward to take the continuation of Phil Hogan as Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development.

A lawyer by profession, after having been a judge for 13 years, Mr Wojciechowski began his political career in the Polish Parliament in 2001 and then in the European Parliament in 2004. From 2004 to 2014, he was Vice-President of COMAGRI.

But before being able to begin his term on 1 November, the candidate Commissioner Wojciechowski has yet to convince MEPs to support him as well as the whole team proposed by President von der Leyen during the confirmation vote of the EP plenary on 23 October. A dialogue with the members of COMAGRI has already started on the basis of an exchange of letters. During the hearing by COMAGRI on 1 October 2019, the exchanges were intense and the Commissioner will only be confirmed after a final hearing on 8 October 2019.

## THE EU TO RENEW ITS ANTI DUMPING DUTIES ON THAI SWEETCORN

Thailand has for many years been the world's largest exporter of canned sweet corn. In response to the arrival of Thai sweetcorn at abnormally low prices on the European market and in order to limit the damage to Community producers and processors caused by this unfair competition, the Commission introduced anti-dumping duties in 2006 on products originating from Thailand. These rights were renewed in 2013 for a period of 5 years.

While the measures were about to expire and in the face of the major risk posed by Thailand for the market balance and the economy of the European industry, the European

Association of Sweet Corn Transformers (AETMD) made a request for renewal of rights AD. DG Trade found this request admissible, and opened in September 2018 an expiry review procedure.

The non-renewal of anti-dumping duties would be highly detrimental for all actors in the sector. The arrival of these products on the market would deprive the European industry of markets and destroy the value of the entire European market, with the consequence of closing several industrial sites and the disappearance of a valuable crop for producers.

## PRICES OF NITROGEN FERTILISERS : EUROPE IS SABOTAGING ITSELF !

The decision taken by the European Union's Trade Defense Instruments Committee (TDI) in mid-September not to oppose an anti-dumping duty on imports of nitrogen solution from the United States, Russia and Trinidad and Tobago, leads to an increase in production costs for European farmers of 2.8 billion euros over the next five years.

European and national authorities, including France, which abstained in the vote when it imports 93% of its consumption of nitrogen solution, have therefore chosen to

deliberately increase the price of this fertiliser in Europe, to the biggest profit of some East European manufacturers unable to supply the market, and to the detriment of its farmers.

This is another blow to the income and competitiveness of European producers of cereals, oilseed crops and sugar beet, which are the main users of the nitrogen solution. This is all the more unacceptable, as it adds to a long list of new burdens and constraints. This once-upmanship must stop!

## WTO NEWS

**On July 4th, the World Trade Organization received a statement from 16 countries criticizing the European Union for its risk-based approach rather than the scientific risk assessment principle for the evaluation of active substances used in plant protection products - thus creating great uncertainty for some of those states that would find it impossible to find alternatives within the deadlines set by the EU.**

This statement was discussed at the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) in Geneva and was supported by many third countries including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay.

These concerns follow the implementation by the EU of measures that effectively prohibit the importation of certain products that may contain residues of active substances that are banned or restricted in the internal market. Thus, these states consider these measures too restrictive with regards to international trade.

In this context, the statement calls upon the EU to re-evaluate its approach regarding the approval of substances on the basis of internationally recognised methods for setting residue levels.

By implementing these measures, it appears to WTO members that the EU is unilaterally attempting to impose its own regulatory approach on its trading partners.

In this context, the next step will be the evaluation of the declaration by the WTO. Despite strong support from WTO members, it does not seem possible that the European Union would change its evaluation system for active substances.

In this respect, the CEPM supports the application of these rules in an equal manner vis-à-vis all products circulating on the internal market. The same goes for the competitiveness of European farmers and maize producers! The evolution of this file will in any case be followed carefully.

## NBTs : STUDENTS FIGHT FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The Commission recently registered a new citizens' initiative for more sustainable agriculture through the use of 'new breeding techniques' (NBT). For the organizers of the initiative, Directive 2001/18 / EC on GMOs is "outdated" and a revision of the NBT rules must take place in order to facilitate the authorization procedure for products obtained through NBTs.

The organizers of this initiative are seven Masters students from the University of Wageningen (Netherlands), a university with a long tradition of applied research and fieldwork. These students argue that NBTs are more efficient and accurate than conventional mutagenesis. Indeed, NBTs could replace conventional mutagenesis to create plant varieties without using strong radiation or chemicals considered too "aggressive". In addition, for students, the general ban on NBTs hampers security and innovation in the EU.

The goal is to use NBTs in the name of sustainability, biodiversity and food security. Thanks to them, breeders can optimize varieties to improve climate and pest resilience. Students also propose "to focus on culture rather than technique" and to avoid "the valuable benefits of new techniques being lost to illogical regulatory barriers".

This initiative is part of the EU Citizens' Initiative [Mechanism](https://ec.europa.eu/citizensinitiative/), which calls on the Commission to propose legislation. In order to be considered as the proposal, the initiative needs to collect one million signatures by July 2020. The CEPM supports this initiative. It can be signed via the link: <https://eci.ec.europa.eu/011/public/#/screen/home>.

## GUIDANCE ON RISK ASSESSMENT ON BEES

At the request of the European Commission in March 2019, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is revising its guidelines published in 2013 on the evaluation of pesticide risks for bees in the EU. The European Commission has requested that the review of the document focuses on evidence on bee mortality "taking into account realistic beekeeping management and natural historical mortality". As such, a stakeholder advisory group was set up last July to be consulted several times during the review process and to provide information to the EFSA Scientific Committee - with a strong representation of maize as the APPR has been selected among many candidates. Member States will also be consulted through the Pesticide Steering Network.

On 26th September, EFSA opened a second stakeholder consultation. They are invited to comment on the protocol that will be used to collect and evaluate the updated data gathered on bee mortality. The revision of the guidance document should also address pesticide exposure pathways. Following this, EFSA should organise a general public consultation and a workshop once the draft guidance document is completed. The document should be finalised in 2021.

This work is of major importance in a context where plant protection products are increasingly restricted. CEPM will therefore remain vigilant on this issue, including via its Agriculture & Progress platform.



### CEPM MEMBERS

GERMANY – *Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)*

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

SPAIN - *Asociación 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)*

### Civil Dialogue Groups

**04-10-2019** : STOCK TAKING OF CDGs - EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

**11-10-2019** : DIRECT PAYMENTS AND GREENING

**15-10-2019** : CAP

**18-10-2019** : INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE

## ECJ JUDGMENT ON THE PPP REGULATION

The 'PPP' Regulation (1107/2009) on the placing of plant protection products on the market is not vitiated by a manifest error of assessment from the EU legislator, confirmed the European Court of Justice in [a judgment](#) delivered on Tuesday 1st October (Case C-616/17).

In this case, several environmental activists are prosecuted for degrading cans of weedkiller containing glyphosate ("Roundup") in commercial premises located in the towns of Pamiers, Saint-Jean du Falga and Foix (France).

Considering that the lack of validity of the PPP regulation could neutralise the legal element of the crime allegations raised against the defendants, the Foix Criminal Court questioned the Court on the compatibility of the Regulation with the precautionary principle.

Even though the judgment of the Court states that the PPP Regulation respects and allows for a good implementation of this principle, it does not seem to preclude questioning the way in which the European institutions and the Member States correctly implement or not the provisions of the Regulation.

### Meetings of CEPM and its members 3rd quarter 2019

- ✓ **CEPM :**
  - **9 October 2019** : Board Meeting, Paris
- ✓ **Germany :**
  - **3 - 4 September 2019** : European maize meeting, Nottingham, UK
  - **23 octobre 2019** : Field demonstrations : straw management after corn, Neuhaus am Inn
- ✓ **Poland :**
  - **September 2019** : Maize Days, 06/09/2019 : Puławy-province Lublin / 8.09.2019 : Szepietowo province Podlasie / 15.09.2019 : Chrzęstowie province Kuyavian-Pomeranian
- ✓ **Portugal :**
  - **4 September 2019** : ANPROMIS Maize Days.
- ✓ **Romania :**
  - **12 - 26 September 2019** : Maize Days, Oregu - Targu Frumos
  - **24-25 September 2019** : European biotechnologies week : advantages of the NBT – Conferences in partnership with the US embassy, the agricultural university of Iasi and agri-food associations, Bucharest - Iasi