

Newsletter CEPM

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



CEPM
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N° 31 – January - March 2022

> Editorial: The Bermuda Triangle

Everyone is familiar with the expression "Bermuda Triangle", the vast geographical area in the Atlantic Ocean between Florida, Puerto Rico and Bermuda where hundreds of ships and aircraft have disappeared without a trace over the centuries.

European agriculture is also faced with a legislative triangle where it also risks being lost. This triangle is made up of three dossiers of major importance, especially for large-scale farming. Two of these dossiers are fairly advanced: the regulation on the use of pesticides, the proposal for which is expected in June, and the revision of the "seeds" directives, for which an impact study is underway and the proposal is expected in the fourth quarter of 2022.

The third, slightly longer-term text concerns new genomic techniques (NGT). The Commission is currently reflecting on the legal framework and content of the forthcoming legislation.

These three texts can be said to condition the future of plant agriculture, especially as they are all in the same time frame. Each dossier must, of course, be managed as such by the competent officials and the respective timetables of the three institutions. But they have a common core that deserves to be managed globally by our professions, because the question that arises is quite simply: "Do we want a modern, high-performance, innovative and forward-looking agriculture" or are we resigned to a return to the past with restrictive, backward-looking, uncompetitive production schemes that discriminate against our competitors?

The answer is self-evident, but it will require an immense effort of mobilisation, communication and education on the part of the agricultural world. Our opponents are numerous, influential and determined. The battle is not lost, but we are faced with a double challenge: to communicate, of course, but also to federate our sectors, our research institutes, our local networks, and our media for a common and offensive management. This is the mother of all battles.

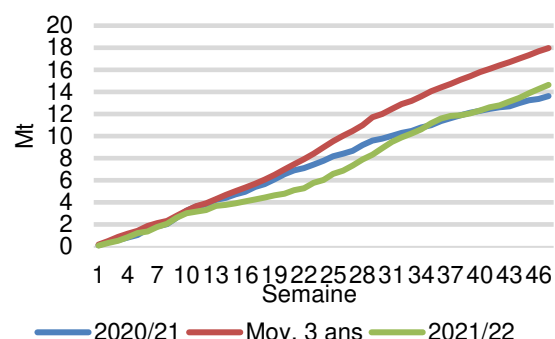
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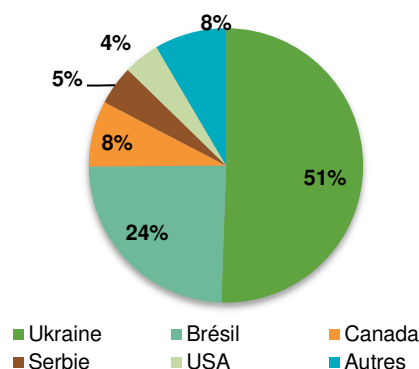
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KEY FIGURES FOR MAIZE:

Cumulative European imports of grain maize from 01/07/2021 to 23/05/2022



Origin of European grain maize imports from 01/07/2021 to 23/05/2022



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UKRAINE CRISIS: FOOD SECURITY AT THE TOP OF THE EUROPEAN AGENDA

Agriculture has always been an important part of European policy. For almost 65 years, actions in this field have succeeded in ensuring sufficient supply, quality products and fair remuneration for those who work hard to feed almost 500 million Europeans. All these policies have worked so well that in June 2020, Environment Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius suggested that food security was "no longer a major concern for the European Union". He obviously did not expect a conflict between Russia and Ukraine two years later.

The war in Ukraine has triggered food shortages, and further increases in the price of fuel, grain and fertiliser, against the background of supply chains already damaged by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussions on the need for emergency measures in European agricultural policy were triggered, and many began to polarise the debate on whether the EU should prioritise the Green Deal or food security.

In a recent Communication on "Safeguarding food security and enhancing the resilience of food systems", the Commission expressed its intention to give priority to food security.

The measures proposed include relaxing some environmental requirements, such as allowing farmers at least temporarily to plant crops on land previously set aside for biodiversity.

The Communication also presents additional funding measures, such as the use of the crisis reserve (€500 million) to support producers and the adoption of a temporary framework for state aid in the event of a crisis, which will support businesses affected directly and indirectly by the Russian aggression.

The proposed measures have many exceptions and can only be a first step. In fact, they show that the restrictive vision of the Green Pact was not the right one and that the Union's agricultural assets should be boosted rather than hindered.

SEED LEGISLATION: IMPACT ASSESSMENT, PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Commission intends to revise the legislative framework for plant and forest reproductive material as part of its 'farm to fork' strategy. The aim is to bring the current rules - which include some provisions dating from the 1960s - into line with the policy objectives of the Green Deal.

The Commission's initial impact assessment identified three possible scenarios for the revision of this legislation: **Option 1** would harmonise and improve the existing framework while maintaining its current structure; **Option 2** would go further and include new elements to meet the needs of the professional sector, seed saving networks and users; and **Option 3** would achieve full harmonisation by proposing a single policy instrument with separate chapters for each crop.

In parallel, the Commission conducted a public consultation - with a deadline of 27 March 2022 - and an impact assessment - with a deadline of 1 April 2022. The results of these two surveys will be published in the coming weeks and will determine how the final text will take shape. The proposal is expected to be published in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Arable crops are at the heart of 3 particularly important legislative revisions which were reported in the editorial on the front page. Seeds, pesticides and new genetic techniques must be addressed as three sides of the same triangle and as a single priority.

With this in mind, CEPM is obviously contributing to all the public consultations in order to relay the positions and concerns of European maize growers.

CAP: COMMISSION COMMENTS ON NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS

The new EU Common Agricultural Policy for the period 2023-2027 was approved by both co-legislators in December 2021 and entered into force on 1 January 2022. Member States had until 31 December 2021 to send their draft national strategy plans to the Commission for review. It appears that 19 countries met this deadline and the last submission was made by Wallonia (Belgium) on 17 March 2022.

For the 19 countries that met the deadline, the Commission sent observation letters identifying elements of the proposed plans that require further explanation, complementation or adjustment before final approval.

A content overview of the letters summarising the key elements of the proposed plans has also been created and presented for discussion with the European Parliament and Member States.

Although the letters are not yet publicly available at the time of writing this newsletter, the published overview provides a reading of the main features of each plan.

This includes, among other things, the number of eco-schemes supported and the amount that will be spent on green programmes. Four countries have anticipated this publication and made their letters available online ([Italy](#), [Austria](#), the [Netherlands](#) and [Ireland](#)).

At a Council meeting on 21 March, Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski said that "all the plans can be improved" and that he was particularly critical of several of them because they lacked the "necessary level of environmental ambition". However, he has since confirmed that he does not envisage there being a rejected NSP!

For the next steps, Member States will rework their plans on the basis of the comments provided by the Commission. The plans should be adopted by September and implementation will start in January 2023.

The CEPM is concerned about a sometimes very bureaucratic vision of agriculture. In particular, it hopes that the concrete translation of the Commission's comments will preserve the production potential of European agriculture.

MIRROR CLAUSES: A PRIORITY FOR THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY

With pesticide targets expected to increase costs for European farmers and productivity levels likely to be compromised, there is concern that domestic products will face competition from imports produced in a 'less sustainable' manner.

Against this backdrop, France - which currently holds the Council presidency - has proposed that imported food and feed should be produced to the same sanitary, phytosanitary, welfare and environmental standards as those imposed on domestic products within the EU. President Emmanuel Macron said the French presidency "will be a great opportunity to promote what we call mirror clauses and to have social and environmental requirements in our trade agreements."

In June 2022, the European Commission is expected to publish a report containing an assessment of the rationale and legal feasibility of applying EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural and agri-food products, in accordance

with WTO rules. Discussions on this issue are likely to continue during the forthcoming Czech (2022/2) and Swedish (2023/1) Council Presidencies.

The mirror clauses seem to us to be positive in spirit, but we find it difficult to believe that they alone will be able to compensate for the damage caused to the European Union by free trade agreements and other inappropriate measures of equivalent effect.

The CEPM is also extremely vigilant about the derogatory measures taken in the emergency context of the war in Ukraine and its consequences. This is particularly the case for the lowering of MRLs for maize imports in a situation of market tension and in the absence of Ukrainian origin on import. These derogations should not subsequently become a standard generating even more distortions, in the exact opposite of the mirror clauses!

INCLUSION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE TAXONOMY

On 30 March 2022, the Sustainable Finance Platform published its report containing recommendations on the technical selection criteria for the four remaining environmental objectives of the EU taxonomy.

The environmental delegated act will likely include agriculture, food manufacturing and chemical manufacturing as activities covered by the taxonomy.

With discussions on the inclusion of gas and nuclear being ongoing, the Commission is expected to publish its next delegated act in the second quarter of 2022, probably in June/July, along with other proposals such as the regulation on the sustainable use of pesticides, which has itself been delayed in the face of the current war in Ukraine.

The work of the platform and the ongoing discussions prior to the adoption of the act have failed to adequately involve agriculture and primary food processing in the debate. The forthcoming delegated act must stimulate the activities of the agricultural sector rather than generate counterproductive measures for investments.

A proper impact assessment should be carried out to ensure that, in the end, farmers have the necessary financial incentives to help them through the transition. This transition must be accompanied, including in agriculture, but cannot be decreed through criteria developed in an opaque way by finance specialists, even if they are green!

Meetings of the CEPM and its member organisations 2nd quarter 2022

- ✓ **CEPM :**
 - **25 May 2022:** General Meeting and Board of Directors, videoconference
- ✓ **France:**
 - **6 April 2022:** Sorghum ID General Assembly and Board of Directors, Paris
- ✓ **Bulgaria :**
 - **29 April 2022:** General Assembly, Plovdiv
- ✓ **Romania:**
 - **5 May 2022 :** « The final of the National Farmer Championship » <https://campionatulfermierilor.ro/#>
 - **26 May 2022 :** « The Wheat Day Baragan », demonstration platform exhibiting recent technologies in wheat and barley cultivation (varieties, phytosanitary solutions, machinery)
 - **9-11 juin 2022 :** « FarmConect Fair Romania », Slobozia (Ialomita)
- ✓ **Portugal :**
 - **23-24 March 2022 :** National Maize Congress, Santarém

Civil Dialogue Groups Provisional timetable 1st half of 2022

- **25-02-2022:** Grandes cultures – Sucre
- **02-03-2022:** CAP
- **07-03-2022 :** Grandes Cultures - COP & seeds
- **15-03-2022:** Grandes Cultures - COP - Flax & Hemp
- **18-03-2022:** Direct payments and greening
- **08-04-2022 :** Environment & Climate Change
- **06-05-2022:** International aspects of agriculture
- **13-05-2022:** CAP

CEPM Members



GERMANY	<i>Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)</i>
BULGARIA	<i>National Grain Producers Association (NGPA) and Council of Agricultural Organisations</i>
SPAIN	<i>Asociacion General de Productores de Maíz de España (AGPME)</i>
FRANCE	<i>Association Générale des Producteurs de Maïs (AGPM)</i>
HUNGARY	<i>Vetömag Szövetség Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktanacs (VSZT)</i>
ITALY	<i>Associazione Italiana Maiscoltori (AMI)</i>
POLAND	<i>Polski Związek Producentów Kukurydzy (PZPK)</i>
PORTUGAL	<i>ANPROMIS</i>
ROUMANIA	<i>Association Roumaine des Producteurs de Maïs (APPR)</i>
SLOVAKIA	<i>Zväz pestovateľ'ov a spracovateľ'ov kukurice (ZPSK)</i>