

Newsletter CEPM

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



CEPM
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> Editorial: The new Civil Dialogue Groups

Since the original CAP, the Directorate-General for Agriculture has been organising regular meetings with all stakeholders in the food chain. The 'Agricultural Advisory Committees' became 'Civil Dialogue Groups' in 2014. The concept is attractive: to bring together all stakeholders, from producers to consumers, around the same table.

In 2013, CEPM mobilised to have its legitimacy recognised and thus participated in five civil dialogue groups (CAP, Environment and Climate Change, Arable Crops, International Aspects of Agriculture, Direct Payments and Greening). At each meeting our representatives are present because these groups allow us to network - and therefore to get to know better - all the stakeholders in our institutional environment, in particular the NGOs. These groups are also an opportunity to make the voice of European maize growers heard on major issues for them.

In order to be in line with the Green Deal structure, the European Commission has planned a new reform: a new division to adapt to the new themes and new calls for applications. Of course, CEPM will be a candidate and will campaign to maintain its representation at the highest possible level.

But we believe that the Commission should take advantage of this reform to strengthen these consultative bodies. The Directorate-General for Agriculture too often sees them as information cenacles where it presents its projects without any hope for the participants to amend them. We believe that it is essential to anticipate discussions even before the impact studies begin. The "new civil dialogue groups" must also, in our view, have the possibility of commissioning specific studies or formulating questions to the Commission, which would be obliged to answer them.

The distribution of seats between the different categories of members seems to us to be just as essential. With each reform, agricultural representation has been reduced to a minimum and this trend must be reversed. The balance of power between producers and NGOs must clearly be re-evaluated and the capacity for dialogue promoted in order to make these bodies a real force for proposals and not a strict recording chamber for the Commission's advances.

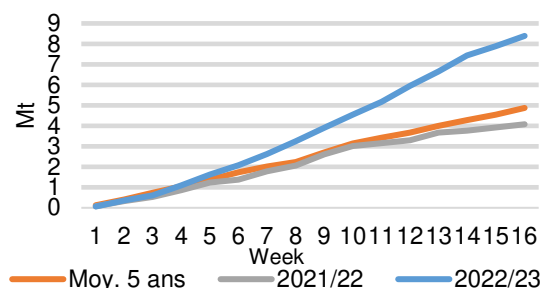
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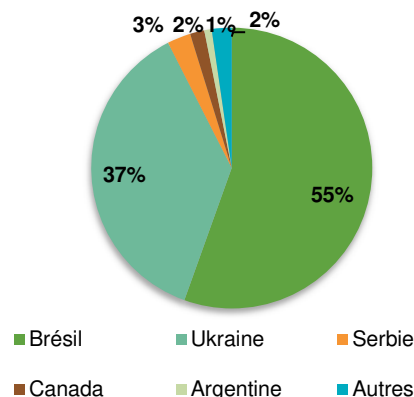
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MAIZE KEY FIGURES:

Cumulative European imports of corn
from 01/07/2022 to 16/10/2022



Origin of European imports of corn
from 01/07/2022 to 16/10/2022



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SUR: INDIVIDUAL REDUCTION TARGETS START BEING ASSIGNED, BUT COMMISSION FACES RESISTANCE

In August 2022, Member States started to be informed about their individual pesticide reduction targets. According to the Commission's assessment, Italy would have to make the greatest effort, reducing pesticide use and associated risks by at least 62%. Malta and Slovenia would come second and third with 61% and 59% respectively.

Portugal would have to make the greatest effort to reduce the most hazardous pesticides, with a minimum reduction of 68%. Malta, Cyprus and Spain come second, third and fourth with 64%, 64% and 60% respectively.

The details of these calculation methods are not yet public, but some EU officials have pointed out that Hungary has proposed an alternative methodology for calculating the 50% reduction target in order to shift the burden onto the larger EU countries that spray more than the average amount of pesticides on their farmland.

According to the Hungarian proposal, the EU should strive for an overall reduction figure of 50%, rather than asking each country to meet a specific target. The Czech Presidency is already working on this approach and discussions on the issue will take place soon. At Council level, the proposal will be discussed on 11 October by the relevant working group and on 12 December by the agriculture ministers.

CEPM continues to oppose the establishment of a fixed target for reducing the use of plant protection products, preferring to define a pathway for reducing impacts based on a shared technical and scientific basis. It is essential that a thorough impact assessment is carried out prior to the implementation of this Regulation, taking into account the benefits, costs and consequences. The impact assessment should also include the effect of restrictions in sensitive areas, which, when added together, can represent a significant amount of land in Member States.

CAP: FIRST BATCH OF NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANS APPROVED

After months of discussions, DG AGRI has finally given the green light to the first batch of CAP strategic plans. By the end of September, 9 countries have received their final approval, paving the way for the implementation of the plans from 1 January 2023. These countries are: Denmark, Ireland, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Portugal and Finland.

A series of documents summarising each of the approved strategic plans was made available by the Commission after the final version of the plan was accepted. These documents can be consulted via the [link](#). The documents highlight, on a maximum of 10 pages, the main features of each plan, also providing an overview of the different subsidy amounts allocated to different measures such as support for young farmers, eco-schemes, environmental and climate objectives and income support.

In total, the 9 strategic plans approved so far 126.2 billion, almost half of the total CAP budget for the period 2023-2027.

With the clock ticking, Member States that have not received a final approval from the Commission are urged to hurry up and finalise their plans before 1 January 2023.

Commission already announced its commitment to the quick approval of the remaining 19 plans, but some countries have not yet responded to the Commission's observation letters that were sent already in the end of May.

Finally, it is important to say that the Commission has also adopted an implementing regulation on the evaluation of CAP strategic plans and the monitoring of their implementation. The purpose of this regulation is to set rules on the detailed information that Member States will have to collect so that they can develop the appropriate IT tools and collection systems to evaluate the implementation of their own strategic plans and communicate the results to Brussels.

STATE OF THE UNION: LITTLE ATTENTION PAID TO AGRICULTURE OR FOOD SECURITY

For almost 8 months, the issue of the war in Ukraine has been in the spotlight in Europe and around the world. Several TV channels and media outlets report daily on the various developments in the eastern part of the continent. The consequences of the war are notorious, especially with regard to food security, as Ukraine has difficulties in exporting and producing grain to feed the rest of the world, especially countries that depend on humanitarian aid.

The idea of using war as a food weapon was discussed in the last edition of this newsletter. Measures have been taken on food security since the war began, including the establishment of so-called "Solidarity Lanes", trade liberalisation measures and the updating of EU state aid rules in the context of the war. Nevertheless, many agree that much remains to be done, and many expected Ursula von der Leyen to be more assertive - to put it mildly - on the issue, during the annual State of the Union Address (SOTEU). The problem is that this did not happen.

Cyber security, green transport and long-term environmental solutions were only briefly mentioned, raising concerns about future progress on these key issues. However, the food crisis was the most glaring omission, especially considering the impact of the energy crisis on agri-food producers and consumers.

The EU remains stubbornly committed to its 'farm to table' strategy, and its plan to halve the use of chemical pesticides by 2030 (aka SUR).

For maize growers in particular, there have been reports of disruptions in eastern countries, notably Romania and Bulgaria, where Ukrainian products are sold at prices that local companies are no longer able to compete with. Although various producer associations, including CEPM, have warned the Commission of these problems, recent statements by Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski downplaying any disruption are not good news for the sector.

In the coming months, Brussels must ensure that its interventions go beyond what Mrs. Von der Leyen's speech proposes, notably by adapting and innovating its agri-food policy to meet unprecedented challenges. In the coming months, the EU must adapt its agricultural policies to protect producers and consumers while pursuing a science-based approach that mobilises innovative technological solutions to promote both food security and long-term sustainability.

ENERGY CRISIS: IMPACTS ON AGRICULTURAL INPUTS SHYNESS OF COMMISSIONER WOJCIECHOWSKI

In August, the price of natural gas per megawatt hour (MWh) in Europe reached a new record high of €348. This increase is having a profound effect on some energy-intensive sectors in Europe, including the fertiliser industry, which relies heavily on this energy source to manufacture its agricultural inputs. Due to the crisis, some production plans have already reduced or suspended production.

There have been several calls to tackle the problem, both from Member States in council discussions and from trade associations dealing with the issue, including Fertilizers Europe. As a result, a few courses of action have emerged.

Firstly, the EU has excluded fertilisers from the scope of the sanctions against Russia. It should be noted that fertiliser supplies were already disrupted as a result of other sanctions imposed on Russia in areas such as transport, insurance and banking.

Meanwhile, declining fertiliser production and rising gas prices have become the priorities of EU agriculture ministers, although the Council has still not approved the Commission's proposal for a temporary lifting of tariffs on urea and ammonia.

The creation of a European fertiliser strategy to help farmers cope with shortages was discussed at a meeting of agriculture ministers in Prague on 16 September 2022 (see below). Just before this meeting, EU Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski offered tentative support for the strategy, saying that the situation is now "so complex" that the EU should respond more coherently to the problem.

At the time of writing, the Commission has already confirmed the publication of such a strategy by the end of October 2022.

CZECH PRESIDENCY: FOCUS ON FOOD SECURITY

Although it was not a prominent topic in Mrs von der Leyen's State of the Union speech, food security was discussed twice by the agriculture ministers during September.

The [first meeting](#) took place in Prague from 14 to 16 September and the main topic of discussion was how to ensure adequate food production and distribution to the most vulnerable countries while also ensuring sustainability. The meeting was food-security driven and beyond praising EU action in the establishment of so-called solidarity lanes, ministers concluded that Innovation, research, and modern technologies – such as precision farming – were main tools that needed to be enhanced to reduce pesticide and fertilizer consumption while maintaining productivity.

In a more formal setting, the [second meeting](#) took place in Brussels on 26 September 2022. Among the topics discussed,

we find most of the developments reported in this newsletter, such as the need for a more targeted impact assessment on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Regulation, the EU-wide strategy on fertilizers and the prolongation of the Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid measures in the context of the Russian war on Ukraine.

Both discussions underline the importance of food security in the current context. While the Ministers focus on the EU's strategic autonomy and on ensuring sufficient food for European consumers, the European Commission is still reflecting internally on how to deal with this issue while implementing its F2F and Green Deal ambitions.

On the other hand, the CEPM believes it is necessary to adapt the Farm to Fork to the new situation and to abandon punitive measures against European agriculture.

Meetings of the CEPM and its member organisations 4th Quarter 2022

- ✓ **CEPM :**
 - **4 October 2022 afternoon:** Administration Council (video conference)
- ✓ **France :**
 - **26 October 2022:** Administration Council Sorghum ID (Video conference or Paris)
 - **23-24 November 2022:** Maize Congress, Pau
- ✓ **Germany:**
 - **25 October 2022 :** Demonstration platform for field machinery, Bad Sassendorf
 - **16 November 2022:** Working Group on Information and Public Relations, Munich
 - **21, 22 November 2022:** Annual meeting DMK, Berlin
- ✓ **Bulgaria :**
 - **24-26 November 2022:** 10th National Agro Seminar "Bulgarian grain for good food", organised by NGPA, Plovdiv
- ✓ **Poland :**
 - **2 October 2022:** Maize Journeys, Skrzelewo
 - **November 2022:** press conference on maize promotion activities
 - **Beginning of December:** annual meeting with breeding and seed companies/action plan 2023

Civil Dialogue Groups

Provisional calendar 4th quarter 2022

- **07-10-2022:** Income support and greening
- **10-10-2022:** International aspects of agriculture
- **19-10-2022:** Environment and climate change
- **20-10-2022:** Arable crops – Starch sector
- **24-10-2022:** CAP
- **05-12-2022:** Arable crops - Rice

CEPM Members



GERMANY	<i>Deutsches Maiskomitee (DMK)</i>
BULGARIA	<i>National Grain Producers Association (NGPA) et Conseil des Organisations Agricoles</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>Vetőmag Szövetség Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktanács (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 pestovateľov a spracovateľov kukurice (ZPSK)</i>