



> Editorial: Growth through Innovation

No enlightened mind can oppose the Green Pact's virtuous objectives. Reducing the carbon footprint, maintaining biodiversity, respecting the water balance, promoting sustainable agriculture, ... The objectives are so ambitious that they could be compared to climbing a very steep hill. Except that the European Commission, relying on bureaucratic dogmatism, has chosen to climb the mountain on the wrong side.

The Green Deal is a bitter potion that, far from promoting European agriculture, which is essential to the world food balance, is locking producers and industries into a punitive and regressive economic scheme. The dominant ideology is quantitative: less phyto products, less fertilizers, less water, less yields, less exports, ... This strategy is double erroneous: it is demoralizing for farmers and unfavourable to the necessary economic growth.

In reality, the Commission - unfortunately followed by a number of Member States - forgets that economic scenarios, if they are to have any chance of being realized, must be built by integrating technological innovation. As a concrete example, it is not by declaring war on water storage for irrigation purposes that we will adapt to climate change, but by innovating, by improving the means of storage, the tools of control, by creating new seeds more resistant to water stress. This is the strategy of those who are betting on their agriculture, China or the USA, but unfortunately not the European Union.

Associating science, innovation, precision agriculture and new technologies with all agricultural and food legislation seems to be a priority to us for which we must mobilize, fight, explain and convince.

This objective, which we must make a priority, must lead us to new behaviours and to new strategies of influence more based on agility and the collective. We must combine visibility and credibility. Much more than communication, it is education that we must make our battle horse. Explain again and again. And denounce the clichés and other caricatures that stigmatize the agricultural world.

And to do this, we must be innovative and creative in re-establishing a balance of power more favourable to our legitimate interests.

This is the sine qua non condition for us to finally be able to calmly consider the future of European agriculture through a contribution to growth by calling on innovation.

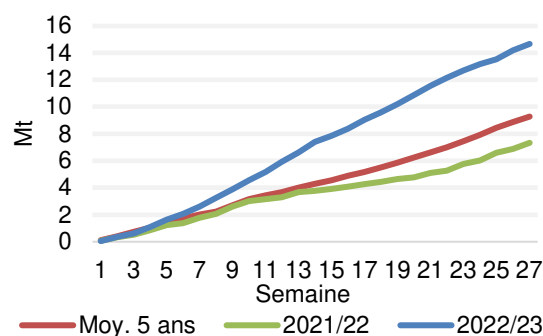
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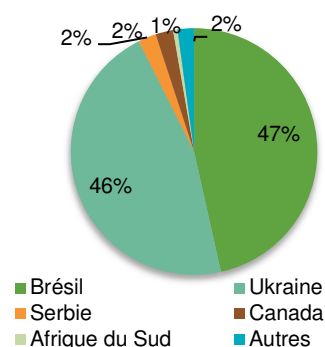
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MAIZE KEY FIGURES:

Cumulative European imports of corn
from 01/07/2021 to 02/01/2023



Origin of European imports of corn
from 01/07/2021 to 02/01/2023



THE CAP READY TO START, BUT NOT WITH EVERYONE'S AGREEMENT

The last National Strategic Plan from the bloc's 60-year-old Common Agricultural Policy was only approved on 13 December 2022, paving the way for the implementation of the new CAP as of 1 January 2023. Among other things, close to EUR 20 billion of basic income support will be distributed to eligible farmers each year – small and medium-sized farms in 25 EU countries will receive higher income support thanks to a redistributive payment amounting to 10.6% of all direct payments.

Nevertheless, a lot of controversy was reported on media in the period leading to the approval of the Dutch Plan. Even though the Netherlands was among the first countries to hand its National Strategic Plan already in the beginning of 2022, Commissioner Wojciechowski and his team held the plan in captivity until the last minute. According to him, the way the Green Deal is being implemented in highly industrialised countries such as

the Netherlands punishes countries like Poland or Bulgaria where farming is less hyper-mechanised.

The Commissioner argued that setting the same requirements for all member states was not fair and drafted a letter to president Von der Leyen expressing his concerns.

In relation to the Dutch plan, the Commissioner stated that "Dutch agriculture uses 50 times more energy than Bulgaria, far exceeds the EU average of pesticides use per hectare, and emits four times more CO₂ per hectare than the EU average". In the midst of different metaphors and complaints about the plan, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen finally dismissed the idea that the plan could be rejected and instead, said that the Commission could intervene and approve the plan if necessary. Wojciechowski finally agreed with the approval.

SUR: THE COUNCIL ASKS THE COMMISSION FOR ADDITIONAL DATA ON THE PROPOSAL

Already in November 2022, it was reported that the Council represented by majority of Member States would be willing to ask the Commission for complementary data on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides proposal. They claim that the impact assessment provided by the Commission is based on data collected and analysed before the outbreak of Russia's war in Ukraine and that it does not take into account the longer-term impact on food security and the competitiveness of the EU agricultural sector.

On 2 December 2022, agricultural attachés already started working on the details of a Council decision formally requesting the Commission for more data on the proposal. The final decision was eventually adopted on 19 December 2022, during the Energy Council.

The decision requests a study complementing the existing impact assessment on the following aspects: **I)** the quantitative impacts of the proposal on food

production in the EU; **II)** the consequences of the proposal on food and feed availability in the EU; **III)** the potential impact of the proposal on food and feed prices in general and in particular for staple food products; **IV)** the quantified impacts of increased administrative burden on competitiveness and profitability of small and medium-sized farms; **V)** the availability of alternatives to pesticides and the potential increased risk of introduction and spread of harmful organisms in the Union; **VI)** quantification of the impact of banning pesticides in sensitive areas; **VII)** quantification of the impacts of the proposed restriction of pesticides on forest stands and forest dependent biodiversity.

The CEPM welcomes the Council decision for complementary data on the SUR proposal. The impact assessment mentioned by the Commission is only a qualitative overview of various policy options and a number of studies on the new regulatory landscape and does not serve as the basis for the proposed SUR.

TRADE AGREEMENTS: DENIAL OF DEMOCRACY ?

At the beginning of December 2022, the Commission announced that the European Union had reached an agreement in principle on the modernization of the trade part of the EU-Chile association agreement dating from 2002. If this agreement does not pose a problem for the corn sector, Chile not being a major global player, the methods of the Commission raise questions.

Indeed, the European Commission has also announced that the agreement will be divided into two parts: on the one hand, an advanced framework agreement comprising the entire agreement and to be ratified by all the member states, and, on the other hand, an "interim" free trade agreement covering only the commercial subjects falling within the exclusive competence of the EU and being able to be satisfied with ratification by a qualified majority of member states... The "interim" agreement will expire when the framework agreement comes into force... but it will not be called into question if the framework agreement is not validated by the Member States or the European Parliament!

This clever legal architecture allows the Commission to bypass the possible opposition of the European

Parliament, the Member States and, if necessary, their national parliaments, to its trade agreement proposals. These methods, which raise questions from a democratic point of view, are very worrying at a time when the consistency of the Union's trade policy and its agricultural policy is more necessary than ever.

It is to be feared that such an arrangement will be used again to implement an "interim" trade agreement with Mercosur, for example, which would be much more damaging for the entire maize sector by multiplying the number of duty-free quotas for grain and processed products (starch, sweet corn, bioethanol, etc.), without any real counterpart on the part of Brazil and Argentina with regard to phytosanitary or climatic aspects...

The CEPM expects the Member States and the European Parliament to oppose such maneuvers by the Commission in order to ensure a real European democratic debate on the subject of trade agreements. Otherwise, there is a real risk of sacrificing European agriculture on the altar of free trade.

RED III: START OF INTERINSTITUTIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

The war in Ukraine has brought energy back at the top of the European agenda. The Czech Presidency prioritised the negotiations on pending files under the Fit for 55 package and since the beginning of October, the first three trilogues on the file took place – on 16 October, 15 November, and 15 December 2022.

Prior to the beginning of the trilogues, the only thing pending was the final negotiating position from the European Parliament which was eventually adopted on 14 September with 418 votes in favour, 109 against and 111 abstentions. MEPs approved the target of 45% of renewable energy in the EU's final energy consumption by 2030 – which is the same proposed by the Commission under the RePowerEU Communication. At a press conference, rapporteur Markus Pieper (EPP, Germany) welcomed the adoption of amendment 13 to article 27

on green hydrogen, which relaxes the rules for the production of renewable fuels of non-biological origin (RFNBO), including renewable hydrogen.

Despite the positive developments, discussions are far from finalised. Negotiations will continue under the Swedish presidency and a final adoption of the text is expected in the second half of 2023, already under the Spanish presidency.

The CEPM places great importance in these discussions and will continue to follow them closely. The CEPM regrets the fact that the contribution of crop-based biofuels, including corn bioethanol, is not better supported. The role of biofuels should be better promoted throughout the Fit for 55 Package, and in particular, within the RED III proposal.

COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023: WHAT TO EXPECT

On 18 October, the European Commission adopted its 2023 Work Programme setting out the legislative agenda for the upcoming months. The programme contains 43 new policy initiatives across different areas, some of which follow up on the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

In the field of food security & food quality, two proposals were missing in the programme, the proposal for a revision of the regulation on Food Information to consumers – also known as nutritional label – and the proposal on plant and forest reproductive materials – also known as seeds legislation.

Among the proposals that were included in the programme, we find: **I)** a proposal for a legislation on New Genomic Techniques (Q2 2023); **II)** a proposal for a legislative framework for sustainable food systems (Q3 2023); and **III)** a proposal on protecting, sustainably managing and restoring EU soils (Q2 2023).

The CEPM will follow closely the publication and upcoming discussions on the above proposals. In particular, the NGTs and PRM (seeds) proposals are of key importance for the CEPM and farmers in general. If well framed, these proposals will help agricultural producers to cope with Green Deal ambitions in light of a shrinking agricultural toolbox and the various regulatory burdens derived from the Farm to Fork Strategy.

Meetings of the CEPM and its member organisations 1st quarter 2023

- ✓ **CEPM - 16 février 2023 matin** : Conseil d'Administration, Santarém
- ✓ **France - 10-11 janvier 2023** : Réunion ATS – actions techniques semences FNPSMS, Montauban
- ✓ **Allemagne** :
 - **20-29 janvier 2023** : Semaine verte internationale, Berlin
 - **3 mars 2023** : Conseil d'Administration DMK
 - **14-15 mars 2023** : Comité de conservation et d'alimentation du fourrage
- ✓ **Espagne - 22-24 mars 2023** : 2^{ème} Congrès Ibérique du Maïs, Barbastro (Huesca)
- ✓ **Portugal - 15-16 février 2023** : XIV Congrès National du Maïs, Santarém
- ✓ **Roumanie - 23 février 2023** : Congrès annuel APPR, 8^{ème} édition, Bucarest.

Civil Dialogue Groups

La réforme des Groupes de Dialogue Civil est en cours, la CEPM a transmis les dossiers de candidatures aux Groupes de Dialogue Civil suivants :

- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on the CAP Strategic Plans and Horizontal Matters
- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on Agricultural Markets
- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on International Aspects of Agriculture
- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on Organic Farming
- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on Quality and Promotion
- ✓ Civil Dialogue Group on Environment and Climate Change

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 Terméktanacs (VSZT)
ITALY	Associazione Italiana Maiscoltori (AMI)
POLAND	Polski Związek Producentów Kukurydzy (PZPK)
PORTUGAL	ANPROMIS
ROUMANIA	Association Roumaine des Producteurs de Maïs (APPR)
SLOVAKIA	Zväz pestovateľov a spracovateľov kukurice (ZPSK)