

NewsletterCEPM

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



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> Editorial: IMPACT ASSESSMENTS: NO SCIENCE WITHOUT CONSCIENCE, ...

"Science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul" said Rabelais 5 centuries ago, meaning that science must be subject to morality and objectivity.

An inobjective impact assessment is an unfair impact assessment, one that deliberately misleads, distorts the results and unbalances the reasoning. It can then lead to poor governance and even undermine trust between the various links in the legislative process.

We have complained about impact assessments on many occasions. And for a very long time. The best example is biofuels, which for 35 years have been the subject of impact assessments whose conclusions always seem to us to have been decided in advance. But that doesn't stop us from worrying when the Commission simply avoids an impact assessment! We are thinking here of the "Farm to Fork" strategy, the Green Deal or the 2035 ban on internal combustion engines for cars.

With the regulation on pesticides (SUR), the Commission is inaugurating a new avoidance strategy. Faced with a pressing request from the Member States to rework and clarify its impact assessment, the Commission, while grumbling at this legitimate request, took its time to present a revised impact assessment ... identical to the previous one on the grounds that the Commission was unable to obtain the data requested by the Council of Ministers!

Once again, we can only deplore the breakdown in the institutional balance between the executive and legislative branches. Ideology and legislation do not mix. Support for Mercosur, taxonomy, soils, nature restoration... stone by stone, it seems as if the Commission is attacking the European agricultural edifice - the only integrated common policy. May the European Parliament's first outbursts against the Green Deal (see page 2) be a wake-up call and a return to reason on the subject of agriculture and our vital need for sovereignty and independence in Europe.

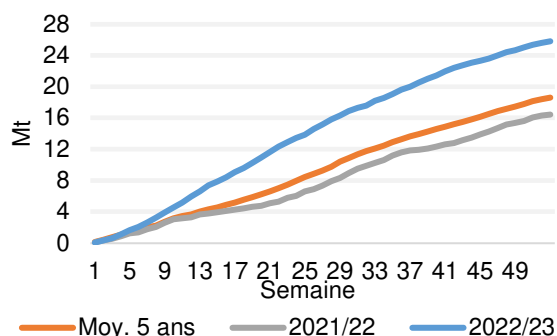
Céline Duroc
Permanent Delegate CEPM,
General Director AGPM

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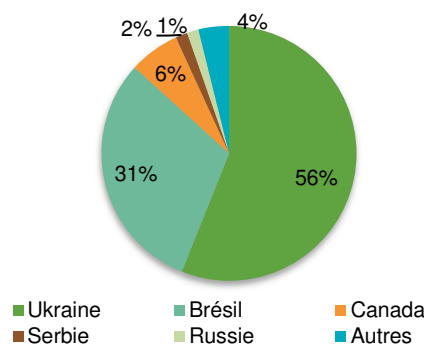
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MAIZE KEY FIGURES:

**Cumulative European imports of corn
from 01/07/2022 to 30/06/2023**



**Origin of European imports of corn
from 01/07/2022 to 30/06/2023**



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MEPs OPPOSE TO EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

On 27 June, the European Parliament's Environment Committee (ENVI) voted down an amended version of the Nature Restoration Law. After going through a long series of amendments, the text received 44 votes in favour and 44 votes against, meaning it failed to receive the necessary majority to move forward.

Following this vote, the ENVI Committee sent the draft legislation to the plenary in its original form, as drafted by the European Commission, with a recommendation to reject it.

Historically, this is the first time that the ENVI Committee has rejected an element of the European Green Deal. Prior to this vote, the AGRI and PECH committees had already rejected the text. However the symbolic impact of these votes was of course less strong.

On the other side of the spectrum, EU countries in the Council voted in favour of the law, but the majority was thin. Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria, Romania and Poland were amongst the biggest critical voices to the text. Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo suggested "hitting the pause button" on the legislation.

All eyes were turned to the European Parliament Plenary Session on 12 July, where all MEPs were be asked to express their final opinion on the text. In the end, an agreement was reached, but by a very narrow majority. This was the start of a battle against the Commission that would continue throughout the Trilogues.

This file will be closely monitored by the CEPM.

EU-MERCOSUR: COMMISSION PUSHES TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT

It is no secret that many of the top-ranking officials in Brussels want the EU-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement to be signed off as soon as possible. With the election of President Lula in Brazil and the prospects of an "easy approval" through the Spanish Presidency of the Council, negotiators on both sides are ramping up efforts to get the deal done.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz are the main champions of the agreement at Member State level. Both countries invest massively in South America and Lula holds a good relation with both left-wing European politicians.

Despite the positive mood, this does not mean the agreement will be easily approved. Opposition voices on both sides of the Atlantic are strong. Lula is showing resistance to the additional sustainability annex presented by the Commission earlier this year, claiming relations between the two blocs should be based on trust rather than on legally binding compromises. In Europe, the French, Dutch, and Austrian parliaments have already

set though requirements for their ratification of the agreement.

One thing is certain, the South American bloc is late in defining a common response to the latest Commission proposal, which could undermine the prospects of having the agreement signed ahead of 2024. In any case, Lula's party is not reputable for being a free trade promoter.

Opposition to the signing of Mercosur is essential, given the devastating effects it would have on European agriculture as a whole, including arable farming, processing and livestock production.

While the debate on mirror clauses is worthy of discussion, the aim here is to oppose the project head-on.

CEPM will take action to this end, both vis-à-vis the European institutions, including the European Parliament – which will have to issue an opinion – and the Council – notably the countries represented in CEPM's membership.

CARBON FARMING: TOWARDS A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR CARBON CERTIFICATION

In November 2022, the European Commission proposed a framework for the certification of permanent carbon removals (CFCR) as part of the larger Sustainable Carbon Cycles objectives. Among other things, the proposal establishes rules for the independent verification of carbon removals, as well as rules to recognise certification schemes that can be used to demonstrate compliance with the EU framework, to ensure the transparency and credibility of the certification process. To be certified, carbon removals must be verified by an independent certification body and meet all of the criteria laid out in the proposal.

The Commission proposal is now being discussed by both co-legislators. In Parliament, the ENVI Committee leads the work with rapporteur Lidia Pereira (EPP, PT) suggesting additional monitoring, expiration, and liability mechanisms to address cases of reversal, advocating for stricter conditions and requirements for non-permanent storage (such as carbon farming and storage in products).

Without changes to the Commission's proposal, only projects focusing on nature restoration, linear woodland and grassland extension could possibly qualify for certification. This approach does not meet the CEPM's expectations for the creation of an income opportunity based on agricultural and maize solutions.

To revert that, proposal should, inter alia:

- Facilitate the development of climate-friendly actions by certifying GHG storage and reduction actions in EU farms.
- Provide maize growers with suitable project choices by measuring the net carbon balance of emission reduction and storage projects.
- Avoid creating new sustainability requirements outside the CAP by recognising CAP-compliant farms as sustainable within the CFCR.

The CEPM will continue to monitor the developments on the file as the legislative process unfolds.

COMMISSION UNVEILS FOOD AND BIODIVERSITY PACKAGE

On 5 July, the European Commission adopted its Food and Biodiversity Package, which comprises measures for the sustainable use of key natural resources to ensure the resilience of EU food systems. The long-awaited package includes the proposals on Soil Monitoring, New Genomic Techniques, and Plant Reproductive Materials (Seeds).

On Soil, the proposal opts for a harmonised definition of soil health, putting in place a specific monitoring framework and introducing provisions to identify and remediate contaminated sites.

On NGTs, the proposal creates two categories of NGTs: those that could occur by conventional breeding and others with more complex modifications. The first would

not require a notification procedure, risk assessment, traceability or labelling as a GMO.

On Seeds, the proposal aims to simplify rules, which have become outdated due to the rapid development of science in the area. Also, the proposal unifies the previous 10 legislative texts on the issue.

The CEPM retains the package to be of extreme importance for EU farmers in light of an alarming depletion of the current toolbox. In considering the proposals, Member States and the European Parliament should balance ambition with realism by adopting flexible frameworks as a demonstration of confidence in farmers' capacity to manage their production in a sustainable manner.

CAP: COMMISSION DEPLOYS AGRICULTURAL RESERVE FUND

The agricultural reserve fund is a EUR 450 million annual package deployed, as a last resort, to mitigate crisis and impacts in EU agricultural markets. In order to be activated, the European Commission needs permission from both the Council and the European Parliament.

Despite existing since 2013, the fund was only used for the first time in April 2022. In the course of 2023, the Commission proposed to use the fund in three occasions, and by June, the entirety of its budget was already spent.

The first two batches were destined to countries bordering Ukraine, which have been expressing concerns about increased imports of Ukrainian cereals and oilseeds on local markets. A total of EUR 156 million were deployed in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary in exchange for the lifting of unilateral trade

barriers imposed on Ukrainian products. CEPM stands in solidarity with its member organisations, which have suffered too greatly from the effects of the conflict.

Finally, on 30 May, Commissioner Wojciechowski promised to use the remainder of this year's fund to support drought and flood-stricken countries, namely Portugal, Italy, France, and Spain. On top of the money, many countries are now requiring to derogations to CAP sustainability rules in order to mitigate mounting pressures in their agricultural sectors.

While the reserve fund should not be overlooked, it is merely a support measure limited in scope and impact. Broader measures must be envisaged to anticipate and adapt to the problems posed.

CEPM & member organisations meetings - Q3 2023

- ✓ **CEPM:**
 - **10 October 2023:** Administration Council, Paris
- ✓ **Deutschland:**
 - **13 September 2023:** DMK Practice Day, Köllitisch
- ✓ **France:**
 - **25 October 2023:** Administration Council Sorghum ID, Paris
- ✓ **Poland:**
 - **2 September 2023:** Corn Day, Garzyn
 - **8 September 2023:** Corn Day, in IUNG Puławy, Lublin Region
 - **10 September 2023:** Corn Day in the Podlaskie Agricultural Advisory Center, Podlasie Region
- ✓ **Romania:**
 - **31 August -3 September 2023 :** FarmConnect, Slobozia
 - **8 September 2023 :** Conference Innovation in Plant Breeding
 - **14 September 2023:** Maize Days, Orezu Ialomița
 - **29 September 2023:** Agricultural Forum, Chirnogi, Calarasi

Civil Dialogue Groups

Provisional calendar 2nd semester 2023

- **CAP Strategic Plans and Horizontal Matters:** 14.09.2023
- **Agricultural Markets:**
 - COP: 06.09.2023 / Fruits and vegetables: 08.09.2023 / Sugar: 20.09.2023
 - Starch: 09.10.2023 / Rice: 05.12.2023
- **International Aspects of Agriculture:** 17.10.2023
- **Organic Farming:** 24.10.2023
- **Quality and Promotion:** 08.11.2023
- **Environment and Climate Change:** 14.11.2023

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 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 pestovateľov a spracovateľov kukurice (ZPSK)</i>