A RETURN TO REALITY

FARMERS' CALL FOR SOLUTIONS TO RESET THE CAP CONDITIONS

In response to the events of the last few years, months and days, the farmers joining the protest rides on 22/02/2024 are demanding an immediate solution to the accumulated problems that have long since outgrown a tolerable limit and have made it impossible to work in agriculture through political and administrative interference.

The fact that today farmers are protesting throughout the European Union is clear evidence that it is essential to address the redefinition of the terms of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy. The primary task of agriculture must remain to ensure food security, producing quality and safe food, while maintaining the economic viability of farmers, with associated benefits such as rural life, protection of the environment, cultural landscapes and traditions and natural resources of each country and the EU as a whole.

Therefore, the agrarian chambers of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Croatia, Slovenia and Bulgaria together with the professional organizations of farmers and cooperatives in Romania, agreed at a joint meeting on 12-13 February 2024 to coordinate their actions and to make demands primarily to the European Commission.

WE REJECT ANY COMPULSORY LIMITATION OF THE SIZE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

WE POINT to the fact that the preservation of agricultural production is already given in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: the implementation of Articles 39 - 44 and 173

WE CALL for the abolition of all legislation that in any way disadvantages European farmers vis-à-vis third-country farmers in the cultivation of field crops, animal breeding or restricts human activity in the landscape.

We DEMAND protection for our own farmers, protection of our own food production and protection of our own rural values and traditions. We need to prevent imports of commodities and food from countries that do not comply with these standards, thus endangering not only
European farmers and consumers, but also the global climate. We support the introduction of mirror clauses to strengthen the protection of the European market and producers.

WE URGE the introduction of an obligation for the European Commission to carry out an analysis of the impact on farmers and their production costs whenever major changes and new conditions are introduced, such as changes to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the implementation of the Green Deal (including non-CAP aspects), or the preparation of other (even partial) strategies and visions affecting directly or indirectly agricultural activities. Until the current framework of obligations, legislation, rules or regulations is reviewed, no new measures will be introduced.

The same procedure will be required by the EC from the individual Member States when submitting strategic plans and their amendments for approval. Following this, a limit will be set on the costs to be borne by farmers and their compensation.

WE CALL FOR THE CANCELLATION OR MAJOR MODIFICATION OF THE EU-UKRAINE DUTY-FREE AGREEMENT

An import tax must be imposed on Ukrainian produce, for the duration of the war conflict, in the form of a refundable deposit to be returned to traders when goods are shipped outside European markets. If the agricultural production is destined for the EU market and remains in the EU, we call for these products imported into the EU to be subject to customs duties and, where appropriate, quotas, and the duty, with the exception of administration costs, will go to the EU budget. The funds collected in this way will be used to reinforce the financing of the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy or used for humanitarian and war aid to Ukraine.

EU POLICY DECISIONS The current duty-free import of Ukrainian commodities into its own market, without respecting the different conditions of production in the EU and Ukraine, has led to its collapse, the absence of a level playing field and leads to unfair competition. In order to promote the export of European and Ukrainian production outside the EU market, subsidies for transport costs through the EU must be introduced immediately.

WE CALL ON the European Commission to change the current set-up of trade cooperation with Ukraine and to prepare a proposal for change in line with the above proposals and the priority protection of its own farmers.

WE DEMAND that surpluses and unusable commodities be siphoned off through processing into biofuels, which would contribute to reducing the EU’s dependence on fossil fuel imports from the Russian Federation and partially balance the supply and demand market.

SIMPLIFICATION AND REDUCTION OF BUREAUCRATIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FARMERS

WE REQUEST a modification of the AMS methodology (especially the QA aspect) so that the number of checks carried out on farmers is reduced to at least the level before its introduction. The reduction in the number of inspections has not been met at all, and on the contrary, there has been a multiple increase. Reducing the number of physical checks can also bring significant cost savings to farmers and inspection bodies and modern technology can offer more consistent and reliable data and maintain high quality standards even without physical checks. In addition,
reducing the number of checks can speed up financial flows to farmers who already lacked operational funding last year.

WE DEMAND the permanent abolition of GAEC 6, 7 and 8. This move will give farmers more flexibility in their farming, which is particularly important in the difficult economic and geopolitical context in Europe. The strict requirement to limit their activities is seen as controversial given the additional costs of non-productive areas (property tax/rent, maintenance expenses without economic return). Removing this standard will lead to greater flexibility of activities in response to economic pressures.

WE CALL for a modification of the eco-schemes, which are perceived as too complex and detached from the reality of modern agriculture. Eco-schemes should be much more responsive to good practice such as precision farming in both crop and livestock production.