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## **A stronger EU response to ensure the availability and affordability of fertilisers**

*Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Helsinki, 18.02.2023*

### **Recognising That:**

- Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has sent the price of fertilisers skyrocketing in Europe. With prices of fertiliser soaring up by almost 150%, farmers are struggling to cover the costs of this crucial input for food production and therefore food security.
- Large quantities of natural gas are needed to produce nitrogen fertilisers. Due to Russia's weaponisation of its energy exports and its illegal invasion of Ukraine, gas prices have skyrocketed.
- This has resulted in 149% increase in the price of these products for EU farmers in September 2022 compared with September 2021. As a consequence of the super inflation in fertiliser prices farmers are buying and using lower quantities of fertilisers, therefore threatening global food security and driving up food prices.
- Fertiliser supply in Europe has been hit with twofold blow. Firstly, the disruptions of fertiliser imports into the EU due to the war in Ukraine but also production of fertiliser inside the EU has been affected by the spike in gas price.
- The EU is highly dependent on fertiliser imports for 30%, 68% and 85% of its consumption of Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium nutrients (NPK). 60% of EU fertiliser imports come from Russia & Belarus. These supply chains are now largely missing from the EU market.
- EU farmers are at a significant disadvantage as their main competitors have access to cheaper fertiliser.



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### **Acknowledging That:**

- The EU Farm to Fork Strategy (2020) has set the target of reducing the use of fertilisers by at least 20% by 2030 in order to reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the EU food systems.
- EU Member States have adopted NAP's (Nitrates Action Plans) 2023-2025 under the Nitrates Directive that include a reduction in the cap of Kg's of Organic N per hectare, and an increase of organic N excreted per livestock unit, effectively reducing the number of livestock units per hectare all in the interest of water quality. This reduction in livestock numbers by stealth will lead to a reduction in production of meat and dairy products and threaten food security.
- The limited availability and much higher prices of fertiliser in 2022 has led to the depletion of residual fertiliser reserves in soils which could have a significant impact on European food production in the 2023 harvest.
- The increases of input costs (feed, fertiliser & fuel) are having on European competitiveness and that farmers from other regions have access to inputs at a lower cost.
- The European Commission's 2017 interim review of the anti-dumping measures on fertiliser. However no significant changes were made to this policy in the interest of protecting the EU's fertiliser industry.
- The European Commission's communication on fertilisers (November 2022) which outlined a number of measures designed to ensure its availability and affordability. The communication is welcomed but does not go far enough to increase supply and reduce the price of fertiliser in the short to medium term.



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**YEPP calls on:**

1. The EU Commission to revise the 2021-2027 MFF (Multi Financial Framework) in a midterm review and to increase the CAP budget to take inflation into account and the impact it has had on input costs (especially fertiliser) and therefore farm incomes.
2. The EU Commission to index link CAP funding to inflation.
3. The EU Commission to carry out a review of all disused fertiliser production facilities in the EU and determine where further production capacity may be possible.
4. For technical and financial support for farmers to promote soil testing and analysis to ensure that optimum soil fertility levels are being met, therefore reducing the need for fertiliser.
5. The EU Commission to provide further financial support to farmers in employing the use of lime, white clover (nitrogen fixing plants) and multi-species swards to reduce our dependency on fertiliser and meet the targets of the Farm to Fork Strategy.
6. The EU Commission to establish an EU Market Observatory with adequate powers to improve transparency in the EU fertiliser market.
7. The EU Commission to abolish all Anti-Dumping measures on non-EU fertiliser imports to improve fertiliser supply and provide meaningful competition in the Single Market, thereby reducing the price for European farmers.
8. The EU Commission to increase the EU agricultural reserve fund significantly to provide financial aid to farmers to meet the exponential increase in input costs to protect farm incomes and to ensure food security.
9. The EU Commission to provide funding and stronger focus on research for alternatives to gas as the main component in the production of fertiliser such as hydrogen.



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