

## Tackling famine caused by the war in Ukraine globally

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Paris, France (22/04/2023)

### Recognizing that:

- After the recent invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports have led to major global nutrition and food security crises, resulting in prices of cereals, sunflower oil and food in general, as well as fertilizers, reaching a record high;
- Even though food instability affects all parts of the world, it is still most evident in African countries that are dependent on Russian fertilizers and already face shortages of them, as well as Ukrainian cereals. For example, Kenya is one of African countries that imports more than half of its wheat from Ukraine and Russia and is facing the biggest droughts in the last 40 years, making agriculture impossible<sup>1</sup>;
- On 22nd July 2022, Ukraine and the Russian Federation signed the *initiative on the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports*, commonly known as the *Black Sea Grain Initiative*<sup>2</sup> in which both parties created procedures to safely export grain from certain Ukrainian ports to attempt to ease pressure on import-dependent developing countries and to address the 2022 food crisis;
- Around 27 % of shipments have already gone straight to low-income countries such as Egypt (8 %), India and Iran (4%), Bangladesh, Kenya and Sudan (2% each), Lebanon, Yemen, Somalia, Djibouti (1% each), and Tunisia (less than 1%)<sup>3</sup>;
- The Russian Federation suspended the agreement of allowing safe passage of Ukrainian crop exports in late October 2022, but decided to resume it after four days, after Turkey and the United Nations had pushed ahead with the shipments over the Russian Federation's objections;
- By early February 2023, more than 20 million tonnes of grain and other food products had successfully and safely left Ukrainian ports. In March 2023, Turkey and the UN announced that they secured a second extension of the initiative for at least another 60 days;
- The Russian Federation is also the leading exporter of energy<sup>4</sup>, directly endangering agriculture because it requires a large amount of energy directly through the use of fuel, gas and electricity;
- Food insecurity around the world and, in particular, in the EU neighborhood, poses a substantial risk to the security of the EU and its Member States.

### Acknowledging that:

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<sup>1</sup> Save the children, [https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/drought-and-ukraine-conflict-sends-food-prices-rocketing&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1680272919709063&usg=AOvVaw0XVSCFW7A1bBa6\\_aigTWY5](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/drought-and-ukraine-conflict-sends-food-prices-rocketing&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1680272919709063&usg=AOvVaw0XVSCFW7A1bBa6_aigTWY5), 21 April 2022.

<sup>2</sup> European Council, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/ukrainian-grain-exports-explained/>, 15 March 2023.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, <https://unctad.org/news/black-sea-grain-initiative-what-it-and-why-its-important-world>, 23 September 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Financial times, <https://www.ft.com/content/4dcc5a5e-d051-4a51-8a9e-348a3bb2c59c>, 18 March 2022.

- Both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are major global suppliers of cereals, producing 53% of the world's supplies of sunflower oil and seeds, representing 30% of world trade in wheat, 32% world trade in barley and 40% of world trade in corn;<sup>5</sup>
- After Canada, the Russian Federation and Belarus are the world's biggest producers of potash, a key ingredient of fertilizer consisting of minerals and chemicals containing potassium<sup>6</sup>, making global fertilizer prices increase by more than 50%;
- Before Russia invaded Ukraine, the price of food was already at its highest level in a decade due to scrambled supply chains and extreme weather events, such as the worst drought in almost a century in central and southern Brazil;
- The United Nations stated that in the last two years, the number of severely food-insecure people has doubled, from 135 million pre-pandemic to 276 million today, a number estimated to increase to 323 million as a consequence of the war in Ukraine<sup>7</sup>;
- Egypt is considered to be the world's largest wheat importer (more than 60% of its wheat comes from abroad), so due to access to lower-priced Black Sea wheat, Egypt has raised bread prices for the first time since 1988, also forcing governments to introduce bread subsidies;
- The values of the European Union (Art. 2 TEU) include the protection of human rights and respect for human dignity.<sup>8</sup> Respect for human dignity and rights include adequate living conditions for everyone, including a minimum level of food security, which is also a matter of human security;<sup>9</sup>
- The European Union and its Member States have a long tradition of supporting humanitarian aid programmes to combat (extreme) food insecurity;
- At the moment, the World Food Programme (WFP) is activating a global corporate emergency, scaling up its direct food and nutrition assistance to prevent famine and death. Due to the unprecedented overlap of crises, WFP's annual operational requirements are at an all-time high of US\$ 22.2 billion, with confirmed contributions so far at only US\$ 4.8 billion (22%)<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, the WFP estimates an additional 47 million people could become acutely food insecure as a consequence of the war in Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

#### YEPP calls on:

- The EU and Member States to promote an anticipatory action plan in this and other food security and nutrition crisis areas in order to prevent future food insecurity catastrophes;
- The EU and Member States to strengthen the supply of food by waiving food import tariffs gradually as well as to invest in resilient food systems that could resist future global instabilities.

<sup>5</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the war in Ukraine, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9013en/cb9013en.pdf>, 10 June 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Government of Canada, <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/our-natural-resources/minerals-mining/minerals-metals-facts/potash-facts/20521>, 8 November 2022.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, remarks of UN Secretary-General António Guterres' to the Global Food Security Call to Action ministerial meeting in New York, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21285.doc.htm>, 18 May 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Treaty of European Union, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012M%2FTXT>

<sup>9</sup> See Article 25.1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>10</sup> World Food Programme, [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000140702/download/?\\_ga=2.17865209.137951865.1667938710-940909334.1667938710](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000140702/download/?_ga=2.17865209.137951865.1667938710-940909334.1667938710), 30 September 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Hunger fallout: How the G7 can prevent the war in Ukraine from escalating the global hunger crisis: <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/6778/ircthehungerfalloutg72022.pdf>, 18 May 2022.

- The EU and its Member States to increase their support for research and development in sustainable agriculture practices, as well as for the production and use of organic fertilizers, in order to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and promote long-term food security.
- The EU and its Member States to step up their efforts to provide adequate and sufficient humanitarian aid to those countries particularly affected by food insecurity, following the guidelines of and in cooperation with the World Food Programme;
- The EU and its Member States to continue to support the *Black Sea Grain Initiative* and, in case, similar initiatives and, in particular, the Russian Federation's adherence to them.