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Brussels,
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Dear Executive Director,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the member organisations and members of the Alliance for agriculture and cooperation. You share your concerns of abandonment of agricultural activities due to a combination of the current geopolitical context and the consequences of the extreme weather conditions in the EU. As a consequence, you ask the European Commission to provide for derogations from the CAP conditionality, eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate commitments in 2024.

I would like to assure you that the impact of both the geopolitical context and the extreme weather events witnessed in many regions of Europe since last spring and summer is followed closely by the Commission.

The request to derogate from various obligations under the CAP in 2024 is a sensitive issue as it concerns key CAP instruments, such as the eco-schemes and agri-environment-climate commitments, designed to contribute to achieving environmental and climate objectives. In addition, the minimum standards for Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions 6, 7 and 8 (GAEC 6, 7 and 8), have as main objectives to protect the soil, preserve the soil potential and improve on-farm biodiversity. These objectives, and hence the underlying practices, are an important part of the transition to a more sustainable and resilient farming system. For GAEC 6 (minimum soil cover to avoid bare soil in periods that are most sensitive) and 7 (crop rotation in arable land), it is important to note that generally, Member States have defined the requirements in a way which gives flexibility for the farmers to accommodate specific circumstances faced. For instance the GAEC 6 obligation to ensure a minimum soil cover in the most sensitive periods can be fulfilled not only by planting catch crops but also by e.g. leaving residual plants and stubbles. The crop rotation obligation under GAEC 7 is important not only as part of an integrated pest management but also for increased soil carbon sequestration and for crop productivity. To avoid monoculture, the requirement can be respected not only by planting secondary crops but also by alternating the main crop between years, which is a well-established agricultural practice.

Ms Liliana PIRON
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Let me also mention that derogations from environmental and climate requirements, especially broad derogations such as those for conditionality (which were granted in the year 2023 for GEAC 7 and 8), strongly undermine the credibility of the new CAP with respect to its sustainability objectives. This would also be the case with a derogation from, for example, ring-fencing obligations for eco-schemes and agri-environmental-climate commitment. We need to do everything we can to strengthen the long-term climate resilience of our farming sector, particularly by using the available risk management tools and climate adaptation measures.

Yours faithfully,



Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI

*Copy to: Mr Lionel ARION, PRO AGRO
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