

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
THE CHAIR

Mr Janusz Wojciechowski
Commissioner for Agriculture
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

D 302167 09.03.2022

IPOL-COM-AGRI D(2022)7683

Dear Commissioner,

On 7 March, AGRI coordinators and a Commission representative (Michael Scannell, Deputy Director-General DG AGRI) held an *in-camera* meeting to discuss the situation of EU agricultural markets in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Mr. Scannell notably reported on the positions expressed in the Council and the steps planned or already undertaken by the Commission.

The discussion confirmed that the destruction inflicted on Ukraine and its people is the most shocking phenomenon with long-term direct impacts on the people of Ukraine. The resulting interruption of Ukrainian agricultural production and exports, as well as the legitimate sanctions imposed on Russia, will severely affect global markets and food supplies. The discussion confirmed our need to support and show solidarity with the people of Ukraine, to ensure food security for our citizens and to play our part in guaranteeing food security in regions of the world where this will be threatened by the current crisis. Increasing resilience in the supply chains will take concentrated and committed effort and decisive action will be needed.

In these circumstances, and following this exchange of views, a majority of Coordinators asked me to convey the following essential points to you.

- There is an urgent need to review the EU's approach to food security, in order to reduce our dependence on imports and increase domestic production. This is particularly pressing for products most at risk of shortages because of the suspension of Ukrainian exports, such as cereals, oilseeds, protein crops and fertilizers.
- Additionally, action at international level must be reinforced to anchor food security in policy decision-making to avoid scarcity in the most vulnerable countries, giving priority to food use of agricultural products and avoiding obstacles in international trade of food.
- To prevent the risk of protein shortage, the Commission should promptly take all necessary steps to temporarily allow the use of plant protection products where effective on those ecological focus areas, which are suitable for growing protein crops for the duration of the crisis. Further measures will be needed to support the use of innovative and sustainable production methods on these areas.

- The measures against market disturbance provided for in Article 219 of the CMO Regulation should be implemented without delay to support the sectors most affected. The crisis reserve should be mobilised for this purpose.
- While increasing production has become our most important priority, national strategic plans should be assessed to make necessary adaptations to the new circumstances, including the use of relevant flexibilities to increase the acreage of lands under production.
- The extraordinary Rural Development COVID measures should be extended to address the ongoing liquidity problems that put at risk the continuity of farming activities and of small businesses active in the processing, marketing or development of agricultural products.
- Measures should be adopted to avoid any disruption of the EU single market and barriers to the free movement of goods, in particular with regard to the free circulation of crucial commodities such as cereals.
- Measures should also be adopted to guarantee more flexibility for imports of crucial commodities (in particular cereals, soybeans and fertilizers) from Third Countries, including the possibility to temporarily re-evaluate currently existing import quotas.
- The European Commission should prepare without delay a detailed action plan to ensure the correct functioning of our food supply chains and ensure food security within the EU.

It is our responsibility to strive to protect the interests of our citizens, farmers and agriculture in the best possible way. I firmly believe that if we take timely and decisive action, the European farming community will be able to meet the extraordinary challenges facing Europe, Ukraine and the world today.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Norbert Lins". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Norbert LINS