Resolution on the Commission communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Commission communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers.

Following the invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the prices of fertilisers and energy increased sharply, having an impact on the cost of food. Prices for nitrogen fertilisers increased by 149% in September 2022, with the largest fertiliser manufactures registering record profits.

Parliament welcomed the Commission communication on fertilisers and its ambition of ensuring the availability and affordability of fertilisers, with reasonable prices, for ensuring the resilience of the EU agricultural sector. It underlined that the availability of all types of fertilisers and fertiliser production is essential for the supply of food to EU citizens and for global food security, as well as for ensuring soil fertility and avoiding soil depletion. It noted that fertiliser production is also essential for the production of AdBlue for the transport sector and of CO2 for the food industry.

Moreover, Members stressed that the limited availability 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 2023.

While considering that the measures set out by the Commission in its communication are a good start, in particular by way of an immediate response to the fertiliser crisis, they are still far from sufficient to address the distortions in fertiliser markets and to ensure long-term strategic autonomy with regard to fertilisers.

The Commission is called on to develop a long-term EU fertiliser strategy and to present a long-term EU sustainable soil nutrient strategy by June 2023. Holistic action should be taken to avoid new dependencies on imported fertilisers or energy and energy carrier imports.

Short-term action

The resolution called on Member States and the Commission to:

- consider making use of the agricultural reserve for the 2023 financial year to provide immediate assistance to farmers in the face of the exponentially rising fertiliser costs and the consequent increase in production costs;

- ensure support for farmers until the market stabilises and alternatives to mineral fertilisers become available.

Member States should prioritise continued and uninterrupted access to natural gas and electricity at **affordable prices** for fertiliser and related AdBlue and CO2 production in their national emergency plans, with a view to ensuring long-term food security, competitiveness on the global market and a functioning transport sector.

The Commission and the Council are asked to extend the temporary suspension of import duties to all mineral fertilisers, except for those of Russian or Belarussian origin, in order to increase the availability of fertilisers for farmers and thus have a stabilising effect on prices, and to make the European market more dynamic by improving logistics and reducing the administrative burden. Members underlined that **the EU should not replace one dependency with another**, this time with imported fertilisers, nor should it jeopardise the shift towards a low-carbon European fertiliser industry, which would result in a significant increase in CO2 emissions globally, impeding the Paris climate goals.

The Commission is called on to:

- update the definition of livestock manure in Union legislation by making a clear distinction between processed and non-processed manure;

- collect scientific evidence on the effects of fermented manure and other processed organic nutrients in terms of climate benefits and the risk of pollution to water;

- exploit the benefits for the environment of using fermented manure and other processed organic nutrients, if scientifically proven, by promoting their use and possibly adapting legislation;

- incentivise the use of **frass** as a fertilisers;

- assess the possibility of drawing up rules for establishing a **joint purchase mechanism** for fertilisers at EU level.

Strengthen the CAP

Member recalled that the mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework could make it possible to strengthen the CAP budget and to take into account the severe impact inflation has had on input costs and farm incomes. They encouraged the EU to seek alternative sources of funding outside the CAP, to develop the relevant measures to ensure the affordability and availability of fertilisers in the EU, and to alleviate the economic impact of the fertiliser deficit.

Member States are encouraged to revise their CAP national strategic plans to close gaps in order to optimise and reduce fertiliser use and nutrient losses, incentivise the replacement and complementation of mineral fertiliser by nutrients from organic sources and accelerate suitable fertilisation measures, in order to secure soil fertility and optimal yields, while preventing carbon leakage in regions with inferior production standards.

Medium- and long-term action

Noting that feedstock for mineral fertilisers, natural gas, phosphorus and potassium largely originates outside the EU, often from autocratic regimes, and self-sufficiency with regard to mineral fertilisers is not realistic in the short or even the medium term, Parliament called for a greater focus on medium- and long-term measures, including investments and new business models, that reduce or eliminate potentially harmful import dependencies and, in particular, avoid creating new such dependencies, increase the EU's strategic autonomy in fertilisers, particularly by decarbonising and introducing renewable energy sources used for the production of green fertilisers, by granting better access to organic fertilisers and nutrients from recycled waste streams, and increasing the circularity of farming, thus strengthening the resilience of the EU agricultural sector.

Parliament called for immediate action, including ensuring proper regulations and financing, to enable the existing EU fertiliser industry to effectively and urgently **decarbonise production processes**, with the objective of putting an end to reliance on natural gas, while supplying renewable, fossil-free and low-

carbon fertilisers to EU farmers. In this regard, the Commission is called on to make new proposals to boost the deployment of small- and medium-scale **biogas plants** to produce fertilisers and energy all over Europe. The Commission is also called on to propose medium- and long-term policy measures to enable the use of **RENURE products**, by classifying them as a substitute for chemical fertilisers based on scientific criteria, as an opportunity for farmers to reduce their dependence on chemical fertilisers and increase on-farm circularity through the valorisation of residues such as manure.

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission to prepare a global strategy aimed at reducing the dominant role of Russia in global fertilisers and food markets, in particular in the immediate EU neighbourhood, emphasising the need for the world to become independent from Russian exports, creating opportunities for renewable, fossil-free and low-carbon fertilisers and food in the EU neighbourhood and the world.