



TEXTS ADOPTED

P9_TA(2023)0059

Availability of fertilisers in the EU

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2023 on the Commission communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers (2022/2982(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 9 November 2022 entitled ‘Ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers’ (COM(2022)0590),
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2022 on the need for an urgent EU action plan to ensure food security inside and outside the EU in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system²,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the New Circular Economy Action Plan³,
- having regard to the Commission communication on a Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid measures to support the economy following the aggression against Ukraine by Russia⁴,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 23 March 2022 on safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems (COM(2022)0133),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 July 2022 entitled ‘Save gas for a safe winter’ (COM(2022)0360),

¹ OJ C 361, 20.9.2022, p. 2.

² OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

³ OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 11.

⁴ OJ C 426, 9.11.2022, p. 1.

- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled ‘A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system’ (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013¹,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/1854 of 6 October 2022 on an emergency intervention to address high energy prices²,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 laying down rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009 and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003³,
- having regard to Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources⁴ (the Nitrates Directive),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 4 January 2023 entitled ‘Drivers of food security’ (SWD(2023)0004),
- having regard to the publication of the Joint Research Centre entitled ‘Technical proposals for the safe use of processed manure above the threshold established for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)’⁵,
- having regard to the question to the Commission on the Commission communication on ensuring availability and affordability of fertilisers (O-000001/2023 – B9-0010/2023),
- having regard to Rules 136(5) and 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 1.

² OJ L 261 I, 7.10.2022, p. 1.

³ OJ L 170, 25.6.2019, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1.

⁵ Huygens, D., Orveillon, G., Lugato, E., Tavazzi, S., Comero, S., Jones, A., Gawlik, B. and Saveyn, H., Technical proposals for the safe use of processed manure above the threshold established for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020.

- having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
- A. whereas fertilisers and nutrient management are essential to ensuring sufficient and quality food production, and play a critical role in relation to global food security; whereas today's fertiliser shortages may affect tomorrow's crops;
- B. whereas the production and cost of mineral fertilisers largely depend on the availability and affordability of natural gas, while accounting for up to 2,1 % of global greenhouse gas emissions¹; whereas producing fertiliser components such as nitrogen and ammonia requires vast quantities of natural gas; whereas gas accounts for around 80 % of fertilisers' production costs;
- C. whereas the planetary boundaries for the biogeochemical flows of the nitrogen cycle (3,3 times) and the phosphorus cycle (2 times) have been surpassed in the EU²;
- D. whereas, as a result of the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, a global mineral fertiliser and energy crisis is threatening global food security and driving up food prices, which can potentially have a profound impact on the most vulnerable populations around the world, who are heavily dependent on access to affordable and nutritious food;
- E. whereas, historically, a large proportion of the natural gas used to produce fertilisers in the EU has come from the Russian Federation; whereas the Russian Federation is the world's principal supplier of fertilisers and their core components; whereas Russia has abused its dominance in gas supplies and fertilisers as a political weapon; whereas the continued high level of mineral fertiliser use risks fuelling the Russian war efforts and supporting other autocratic regimes;
- F. whereas inflation is having a major impact on the European agricultural sector, particularly as it is putting a serious strain on the current budget of the common agricultural policy (CAP);
- G. whereas a high number of European mineral fertiliser manufacturers have downsized their operations or stopped production altogether, largely as a result of the rise in the costs of natural gas, but also owing to taxation and competition from less bureaucratic countries, leading to shortages, fertiliser price increases and lower yields arising from the inability of farmers to have access to the fertilisers

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-18773-w>

² https://commission.europa.eu/publications/analysis-main-drivers-food-security_en, p. 26.

they need in order to meet their production requirements and, ultimately, impacting food availability and affordability;

- H. whereas the world's largest fertiliser manufacturers have been making record profits¹;
- I. whereas farmers are now faced with the question of how much they can risk in their sowing and production decisions, or are even faced with the decision to stop their agricultural activity altogether, as the prices of fertilisers have been very volatile and have over the last two years risen to levels never seen before in Europe, thereby impacting the level of farmers' income and even farm management; whereas the availability of raw materials for the production of fertilisers is not guaranteed, which might cause shortages for farms during the growing season;
- J. whereas the increase in agricultural input costs has been a major factor in the high food commodity prices over the past two years; whereas the currently expected future prices of cereal crops for the 2023 harvest may not reflect current input costs and, as a result, returns may be below the cost of production; whereas in some Member States, particularly those in proximity to the war in Ukraine, the selling price has already not covered the production costs; whereas as a result of investing in fertilisers while prices remain high, farmers are facing risk owing to the possibility of fertiliser prices falling significantly in the short term;
- K. whereas owing to increased liquidity requirements and the volatility of the fertiliser market, many small merchants are not in a position to risk entering the market, which is reducing competitiveness; whereas the Commission should take measures to mitigate this risk in order to enable greater competition;
- L. whereas the farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system has set the target of reducing nutrient losses by at least 50 %, while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility; whereas Parliament, in its resolution of 20 October 2021 on the strategy, welcomed this target, also insisting on the need to ensure that there is no deterioration in soil fertility; whereas achieving this target will reduce the use of fertilisers by at least 20 % by 2030;
- M. whereas the current crisis in the availability of mineral fertilisers underlines the fundamental role played by livestock in the balance of European agriculture in maintaining crop production by replacing and complementing mineral fertilisers; whereas there continue to be

many sources of organic nutrients that are currently not utilised to the fullest, such as livestock manure, digestate, frass and sewage sludge; whereas the processing of organic nutrients to organic fertilising products can play an important role in achieving the goals of the farm to fork strategy and the Union's climate objectives;

- N. whereas according to the Combined Drought Indicator (CDI), including the first 10 days of August 2022, 47 % of Europe has been in warning conditions of severe drought and 17 % in alert conditions; whereas the regions affected by drought in spring 2022 have been the ones with the most worsening conditions¹;
 - O. whereas the implementation of recovered nitrogen from manure (RENURE) as part of manure management systems enables a progression towards a more circular economy and increased resource efficiency in the EU food system;
 - P. whereas the Commission's own Joint Research Centre has developed criteria for the safe use of processed manure above the threshold established for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Nitrates Directive;
1. Emphasises the reported price increase for nitrogen fertilisers by 149 % in September 2022 and welcomes 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;
 2. Underlines 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; notes that fertiliser production is also essential for the production of AdBlue for the transport sector and of CO₂ for the food industry; is concerned about the unprecedented increase in nitrogen fertiliser prices, for which high natural gas prices and disrupted access to gas supplies have also been a contributing factor, and stresses that this can have a significant impact on the costs of agricultural production and the competitiveness of the EU agricultural sector;
 3. Stresses 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;
 4. Considers 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, but are still far from sufficient to address the distortions in fertiliser markets and to ensure long-term strategic autonomy with regard to fertilisers; calls

¹ https://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/news/GDO-EDODroughtNews202208_Europe.pdf

on the Commission to develop a long-term EU fertiliser strategy and to present a long-term EU sustainable soil nutrient strategy by June 2023; calls for holistic action to be taken promptly to avoid new dependencies on imported fertilisers or energy and energy carrier imports, and to ensure global food security by promoting sustainable food production that respects the environment and is adapted to climate change, while taking into account the regional, European and global economic and social context;

5. Stresses that there is a need for long-term solutions at EU level, in particular to avoid any economic distortion between the Member States' agricultural sectors;
6. Recalls that even short-term fertiliser unavailability or lack of affordability may jeopardise timely crop cultivation with a negative impact on farmers' income; recalls further that this may contribute to food insecurity;
7. Stresses the effect the increase of input costs is having on EU agriculture and highlights that farmers from other regions such as Russia and South America have access to significantly lower fertiliser cost thus undermining the competitiveness of EU farmers;

Short-term action

8. Calls on the 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;
9. Stresses, however, that the use of the crisis reserve is not a sufficient financial response to address the challenges and that a more robust response is needed to tackle the current crisis; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure support for farmers until the market stabilises and alternatives to mineral fertilisers become available; notes that consecutive reductions in the CAP budget, alongside inflationary pressures, have further lowered the viability of EU farmers;
10. Calls on the Member States to prioritise, in this context, 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;
11. Fears that the support for farmers and fertiliser producers through the Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid may pose a risk of renationalisation, fragmentation and competition between different markets and among individual farmers; stresses that common

measures must be favoured and underlines the need for a level playing field and the fair distribution of supply across the Union;

12. Recalls, in this context, 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; encourages 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;
13. Reminds the Member States of the possibility to develop, in the framework of their CAP strategic plans, specific eco-schemes to promote organic fertilisation or the greater development of optimum soil pH levels, which would require less fertiliser use and result in the maximum utilisation of limited supplies, or sectoral interventions in the 'other sectors' chapter, which may include, among other things, measures to stimulate the development of alternatives to mineral fertilisation, to support joint and cooperative approaches to shortage scenarios, and to apply innovation and technology to reduce fertiliser use;
14. Recognises and gives differential support to the role played by agri-food cooperatives, owing to their logistical, organisational and economic capacity to promote local fertiliser manufacturing projects, both from livestock and alternatives to fossil fuel-based fertilisers;
15. Calls on the Commission to support Member States in identifying solutions for the efficient use of CAP strategic plans to help address the situation of fertilisers; encourages the Member States to revise, where necessary, 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; emphasises that these revisions should be made in a timely manner, provided that the quantity and quality of production is not reduced, and should not be counted as an amendment to their CAP national strategic plans, which is only allowed once a year; highlights the clear benefits that crop rotation with legumes can offer as a fertilisation measure in this context, given its capacity for nitrate fixation, thereby reducing the need for fertilising inputs; calls on the Commission to ensure that all Member States avail their farmers of the option to use catch crops in the context of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions in the CAP;

16. Encourages the Member States to fully exploit the potential of the recently adopted Regulation (EU) 2019/1009, which revised the rules on the making available on the market of EU fertilising products and enables the opening of the EU single market to organic and bio-waste-based fertilisers by granting them access to CE marking;
17. Calls on the Commission to update the definition of livestock manure in Union legislation by making a clear distinction between processed and non-processed manure in order to properly regulate them in view of their different compositions and risks in terms of pollution;
18. Calls on the Commission to 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; calls on the Commission to 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;
19. Regrets the fact that the communication does not serve to facilitate the use of organic alternatives to chemical fertilisers, such as RENURE, digestate from bio-waste obtained by the anaerobic digestion of livestock effluents, and any other effective and verified instrument, which can be used both in agriculture and in the livestock sector, and calls for Annex III to the Nitrates Directive to be amended to this end, while continuing to uphold the principles of efficiency and safety; calls, in the meantime, in the light of the current crisis, for a temporary derogation, as RENURE products and digestate have the potential to substitute chemical fertilisers without resulting in additional emissions, nitrogen losses or manure production; calls on the Commission to propose, without further delay, and at the latest in its upcoming integrated nutrient management action plan (INMAP), legislative measures to implement the legal and safe application of the criteria as developed by the Joint Research Centre to enable the safe use of RENURE above the thresholds established for Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Nitrates Directive;
20. Notes that the use of frass as a fertiliser can play an important role in meeting soil nutrient requirements; calls on the Commission, in that regard, to incentivise the use of frass by removing unnecessary legislative and administrative burdens as soon as possible;
21. Stresses that any delay in the recognition of the re-use of nutrients from processed manure under the same conditions as chemical fertilisers would prolong the lack of a level playing field between fertilising products with equal characteristics;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Council 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; underlines 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;

23. Calls for the creation of a support mechanism for traders to manage the risk of buying fertiliser in bulk; notes the need to ensure that traders can enter the market with reduced risk through a forward buying system that protects them from accruing unsustainable levels of debt;
24. Regrets the fact that the Commission did not put forward an impact assessment of the consequences of reducing nutrient losses by at least 50 % by 2030 and calls for immediate action to remedy this;
25. Calls on the Commission to assess the possibility of drawing up rules for establishing a joint purchase mechanism for fertilisers at EU level;
26. Calls on the Commission and the Council to improve the functioning of the European market for fertilisers by reducing its logistical bottlenecks and to ensure balance, particularly as regards imports, reducing the administrative burden on fertiliser imports and trade, and facilitating off-season purchases and storage by distributors and farmers;
27. Recognises the increased liquidity needs of merchants and the necessity to make financing available through the European Central Bank to facilitate borrowing and the forward buying of fertilisers;
28. Calls on the Commission to build strategic alliances with reliable partners to facilitate the sourcing of fertilisers in the medium term;
29. Stresses that market manipulation is affecting fertiliser supplies and has the potential to affect the forward contracting of grain and feed, thereby leading to further food price inflation for consumers;

Medium- and long-term action

30. Takes note of the fact 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; calls, therefore, 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;

31. States that the EU's new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) has the important objective of preventing carbon leakage, which should be combined with other EU objectives such as ensuring food security;
32. Calls 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;
33. Notes that Russian gas, used in the production of fertilisers, contributes to the financing of the war in Ukraine; calls, therefore, for sufficient resources to be allocated as soon as possible to end dependence on this gas;
34. Stresses the need to accelerate the process of decarbonising and increasing the sustainability and resilience of the nitrogen fertiliser industry by using fossil-free, low-carbon and renewable energies and recycled nutrients to produce fertilisers, in particular nitrogen from the composting of manure, in order to reduce the dependence on natural gas; in this regard, calls on the Commission to make new proposals to boost the deployment of small- and medium-scale biogas plants to produce fertilisers and energy all over Europe and with a strategic regional focus, in order to support farmers to create a sustainable EU value chain which will lessen the EU's dependency on third countries; notes that the increase in the number of anaerobic digestion plants in agriculture, the main strategic purpose of which is the production of biomethane and digestate, should not take place solely at the expense of CAP funding;
35. Calls on the Commission 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;
36. Notes the potential of Europe's offshore wind to generate electricity for hydrogen and ammonia production; calls on the Commission to investigate the feasibility of an integrated model to produce

ammonia both as a sustainable fuel for maritime transport and as a sustainable fertiliser source;

37. Calls on the Commission to present an impact assessment, comprehensively analysing the supply of nutrients to EU farming from mineral, organo-mineral and organic fertilisers, with a focus on ensuring the long-term objective of self-sufficiency in nutrient supply;
38. Stresses the need to develop future-proofed liquefied natural gas terminals to facilitate the handling of both hydrogen and ammonia;
39. Stresses the need to improve fertilisation and nutrient use efficiency by farmers by incentivising sustainability and optimisation, in particular through access to tailored technical advice, digitalisation, innovation, precision farming and nutrient management tools allowing for enhanced farming practices, as well as by prioritising and supporting agro-ecological practices; insists that a financial effort is needed to achieve this;
40. Recognises the advances achieved in replacing artificial fertilisers through the developed, modern agro-ecological methods used in everyday farming on innovative holdings; calls for the dissemination of these practices through advisory services, farmer-to-farmer exchanges and schools;
41. Calls for a stronger focus on the circular economy and agro-ecology and thus a stronger research focus, in the framework of EU research programmes, on the development of innovations, including by accelerating the use of RENURE and by supporting the rediscovery, spread and sharing, especially through farming schools and advisory services, of agro-ecological knowledge, methods and innovations, in order to develop new fertilisers or other alternatives and foster precision farming;
42. Calls on the Commission to collect and share information and experiences from Member States on practices such as optimising the use of fertilisers, nutrient recycling and the use of alternative nutrients, while also taking into account the obstacles facing these alternatives when scaling up their use, and to detail how these difficulties can be overcome; encourages the implementation and upscaling of the Farm Sustainability Tool (FaST) at Member State level to provide EU farmers with personalised and accurate advice on nutrient management, including fertiliser requirements; supports, in this regard, the deployment of digital decision support tools, particularly in collective and cooperative settings, to overcome the limitations of small farm size;
43. Notes the significant opportunity to reduce the Union's collective dependency on chemical fertilisers through the more effective use of organic manure produced by livestock, nitrogen fixing crops such as

clover and nutrient management techniques; calls on the Commission to financially support the use and development of these measures;

44. Recognises that organic manure produced by livestock is a critical component in the transition to more sustainable food systems and plays a key role in many organic farming systems;
45. Urges the Commission to diversify the sources of fertilisers and identify new, and sustainably expand existing, mineral deposits in the EU in order to reduce dependency on foreign markets and stimulate greater self-sufficiency; highlights that the EU must develop the supply of organic fertilisers and agro-ecological techniques in the long term to reduce dependency on nitrogen fertilisers;
46. Calls for the swift adoption of legislation on new plant-breeding techniques, including in particular new genomic techniques, which will increase crop yields without increasing the need for fertilisers; calls on the Commission and the Member States to support research into and the development of new plant-breeding techniques, including new genomic techniques;
47. Calls on the Commission to carry out a review of all disused fertiliser production capabilities in the EU and to determine where further production capacity may be possible;
48. Supports the manufacture of green fertilisers using local resources and renewable energy, such as green ammonia;
49. Advocates, without jeopardising the goal of food security, the use of leguminous crops to maintain and improve soil quality and calls for increased cultivation of leguminous crops at EU level in order to increase biodiversity and nitrogen fixation; calls on the Commission to present a European protein strategy in due course, with a strong focus on leguminous crops for enhanced farming practices;
50. Emphasises the need to support soil and trace element testing at farm level; stresses that such knowledge enables farmers to plan more efficient fertilisation, cultivation and soil management actions, as well as providing the basis for a sustainable crop rotation programme; calls on the Commission to set up a 'test your soil for free' initiative, as announced in the EU's soil strategy for 2030, and for technical and financial support in the form of an eco-scheme or second-pillar measure;
51. Highlights the importance of crop rotation for soil fertility;
52. Stresses the need to provide further financial support to farmers in employing the use of lime, clover and multi-species swards to help

address our collective dependence on fertilisers and meet the targets of the farm to fork strategy;

53. Encourages the increased use of biostimulants to optimise fertilisation by improving nutrient absorption and efficiency, to strengthen the tolerance of plant crops to abiotic stress caused by climate change impacts such as drought and extreme temperatures, and to improve their performance; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to invest in the expertise and number of experts at the disposal of the European Food Safety Authority and to improve the speed at which new biostimulants can be assessed and approved;
54. Acknowledges that organic farming is less exposed to price increases, yet pending the transition to the use of sustainable types of fertilisers, the fertiliser industry in the EU must have access to the necessary imports, including gas, to produce fertilisers within the EU itself and to ensure that the prospects for EU harvests are not jeopardised; calls on the Commission to speed up the measures set out in its communication to address the risks and vulnerabilities identified through the European Food Security Crisis Preparedness and Response Mechanism;
55. Encourages, in addition, the use of compost and other soil amendments to improve soil health and fertilisation, while contributing to the fight against drought, taking into account the water storage properties of these products;
56. Notes that nitrous oxide represents a significant portion of EU agricultural emissions and therefore calls for the use and prioritisation of fertilisers without nitrous oxide emissions;
57. Welcomes the Commission's announcement of an INMAP; advocates recognition of the importance of a balanced crop nutrition for healthy soils and food production and an unbiased search for alternative nutrient-rich side streams and energy sources, promoting the use of all safe bio-waste and animal by-products; stresses that the INMAP should focus on improving nutrient use efficiency, encourage the development of green fertilisers and optimise the use of mineral and organic-based fertilisers via precision farming, nutrient management planning and improved storage and transport, while not imposing unnecessary additional burdens on farmers, fully respecting the regulatory limits and taking precautions against anti-microbial resistance;
58. Notes that human waste currently represents one of major unclosed loops in the nutrient cycle, as the nutrients from sewage are mostly not returned to agricultural soils; calls on the Commission to further incentivise techniques that help retrieve nutrients from sewage sludge, including by introducing end-of-waste criteria for materials

that can be recovered from sewage treatment plants, and by developing criteria for their safe application to agricultural soils;

59. Calls for the presence of livestock on most territories to become a long-term objective of agricultural policies; believes that a more uniform availability of organic fertilisers should be part of the EU's strategy for its agriculture;
60. Calls for an analysis of the possibility of an extension of regional flexibility in the framework of the Nitrates Directive, bearing in mind the objective of reducing pollution; calls on the Commission to consider adopting rules on a balanced nitrogen budget per holding and exemptions from the limit of 170 kg of nitrogen per hectare per year for organic fertiliser and equivalent products, taking into account different conditions in specific Member States and regions with favourable climatic conditions, as well as having regard to the efficient use of fertilisers, the optimisation of fertilisation, the use of bio-waste and secondary nutrient sources, and the use of biostimulants;
61. Expresses concern at the lack of transparency in the fertiliser market and favours further action to improve transparency and public information, both at EU and global level, in this market and regarding the raw materials used for the production of fertilisers; calls on the Commission to closely monitor the excess profits of global fertiliser manufacturers and, if necessary, to investigate cartel agreements and dominant market positions, to examine the possibilities for taxes on windfall profits and to make proposals in this regard in order to combat unfair competition; calls on the Commission to set up a market observatory dedicated to the monitoring of international and domestic supply and stocks of fertiliser, and to reduce the impact of speculation on the market;
62. Takes note of the fact that the median energy and fertiliser shares of total input costs across EU Member States and years are 8 % and 6 % respectively, but there is a considerable variation in the cost shares across countries and years¹; considers it, therefore, both timely and appropriate to speed up the process of external convergence to empower farmers in the Member States where this process has not yet been completed to cope with the present challenges;
63. Calls on the Commission to prepare a global strategy aimed at reducing the dominant role of the Russian Federation 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

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/analysis-main-drivers-food-security_en

renewable, fossil-free and low-carbon fertilisers and food in the EU neighbourhood and the world;

64. Urges the Commission to take into account the impact studies carried out by the Joint Research Centre that warn of the negative effects on production and food security that restricting the use of fertilisers could have in the short term, without having viable commercial alternatives for farmers;

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65. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the Council.