



Brussels, 14 December 2018

AGRIFISH Council meeting discussion on the European Commission report on the development of plant proteins in the European Union

Dear Minister of Agriculture,

On behalf of the undersigned organisations, we are writing to you with regard to the Commission's *report on the development of plant proteins in the European Union* (COM(2018) 757 final) in advance of its discussion during the next AGRIFISH Council on 17th December.

We generally welcome this initiative to ensure a sustainable European Union (EU) supply of plant protein crops, in particular its recognition of the importance of protein crops for human consumption and the growing market for plant-based meat and dairy alternatives. However, we regret that it still shows inconsistency and lacks teeth in terms of concrete policies. A glaring omission is its failure to identify industrial animal production systems as the leading driver of protein crop demand, including from outside the EU, and the need to transition to less resource intensive farming practices in the EU.

We hope that your office will tackle the issue of plant protein deficiency by addressing the following areas, which we have previously raised with the EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan and the Austrian Presidency:

- Reducing overall demand for animal feed by lowering EU production and consumption of animal products, thereby reducing the number of farmed animals in the EU
- Promoting balanced, sustainable and mainly plant-based diets, alerting consumers about the health benefits of reduced meat consumption
- Adopting an Action Plan to halt deforestation and forest degradation, which is often associated with imported animal feed

As part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), our recommendations are :

- Removing subsidies for intensive animal production and increasing incentives for extensive animal production systems
- Excluding monoculture soya production from any CAP support
- Focusing policy measures on leguminous crops, due to the environmental benefits they can entail, with the exclusion of other high protein crops such as oilseeds;
- Introducing long-term crop rotation with leguminous crops as a compulsory element of conditionality requirements under the CAP
- Prohibiting any crop production including protein crops in ecological focus areas

A robust EU plant protein strategy must be designed in line with existing health and environmental legislation and aim to increase diverse protein crops for human food. It should decrease plant protein

use for animal feed, leading to an overall decrease of imported plant protein feed in the EU and ensuring a transition towards a sustainable food system.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope that you will address our concerns and recommendations during the meeting on 17th December.

Yours sincerely,

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