



FORUM FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Media statement

Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture Vienna, Austria

Vienna, June 14, 2016

Forum calls for actions and collaboration to meet societal expectations of European agriculture

The Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) came to Vienna today to discuss the challenges for global food production, European farm policy and land property rights, especially in the context of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Participants and speakers agreed that the challenges agriculture is facing in the 21st century will be unprecedented. With a growing global population, a changing climate, and existing pressures on biodiversity, there is both a need for increased food production but also an acknowledgement that this cannot come at the further expense of ecosystems worldwide. This follows on from the conclusions of the main FFA held in Brussels in March 2016 where it was concurred that to implement the SDGs means there is no time for business as usual.

Discussions today focused on topics such as how sustainable farming could look like in the future, producing enough to feed a growing population while not increasing pressure on natural resources such as land, water and biodiversity. Furthermore, the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was discussed and whether it was fit to enable Europe to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, questions on the role of land managers and property rights to ensure environmental protection were elaborated.

In his opening speech to the meeting, FFA Chairman, **Janez Potočnik** said:

“Food is one of the great connections that we have as human beings; it brings us together, connects us to our families and to different global cultures. Unfortunately, current food production systems also bring together many of the flaws that we see elsewhere in our cultures and economies: waste, inefficiency and a disregard for the environment. In order to make global food chain sustainable, they must be addressed without delay. We must increase the efficiency of livestock feed, vastly improve our nutrient and water use, and reduce the appalling waste in our current systems. If we do not, we will leave a legacy to future generations that is far diminished from what our parents left to us.”

Folkhard Isermeyer, President, Johann Heinrich Thünen Institute, explained:

“Agricultural production will be able to keep up with the growing demand for food and feed. However, sustainability is at risk. In view of global threats (e.g. climate change) we need a “global architecture” for sustainable agriculture where national or private sector’s strategies can fit in.”

Allan Buckwell, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of European Environmental Policy, said:

"Europe's Common Agricultural Policy has always adapted to the changing economic and political climate. This process has some way to run. Agriculture cannot stand aside from the international commitments the EU has signed up to in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate agreement, and it is far from clear that the present CAP can demonstrate it provides best value for money from the EU budget. Suggestions will be made about the directions for future evolution of the CAP beyond 2020."

Reinhard Mang, Secretary-General of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management, reminded the audience:

"Agricultural and forestry holdings shape rural areas significantly and constitute pillars of rural development. They need a stable political and economic environment to thrive. Public authorities support them as a reliable partner, ensuring that they may also in the future continue to contribute creating value in the countryside."

Thierry de l'Escaille, Secretary-General of the European Landowners' Organization and co-founder of the FFA, said:

"We know that agriculture and forestry around the world must change course if we are to achieve long-term sustainability and protect our biodiversity. Fortunately, many of our members are already doing more than ever to ensure these outcomes. However, we cannot do this alone. The European consumer needs to make a decision; they cannot have extraordinarily cheap food prices that cause farms to go bankrupt, as well as the highest standards of quality. Land Managers deserve to be rewarded for all their hard work by consumers and by a much better share of the prices paid in the supermarket. Farmers cannot be green if their business is failing."

Juan Gonzalez-Valero, Head Public Policy and Sustainability, Syngenta and co-founder of the FFA, said:

"Agriculture today is struggling to meet for global needs. A global controversy about the right and the wrong production systems is getting in the way of a constructive dialogue for better solutions. Innovation for the future needs to meet the resource efficiencies that sustain agricultural productivity, while mitigating the effects of climate change; the ecosystem resilience necessary to protect natural resources; and the far-reaching knowledge transfer to rural communities in order to share the economic benefits of better agricultural production. Syngenta's Good Growth Plan is a way to measure progress against those commitments."

Felix Montecuccoli, President, Association of Austrian Land and Forest Owners, said:

"The current slump in general commodity prices causes extreme price pressure on the agricultural sector. Today, farmers are not only experiencing a decrease in income due to low commodity prices but also a decline in public funding, a growing administrative burden and they face challenges caused by a changing climate. One approach to improve the operating conditions would be to inception a risk equalisation mechanism through the taxation of profits. Climatic extremes and turmoil on commodity markets lead to fluctuating operating results. An appropriate risk adjustment could be achieved through a multi-annual equalisation reserve. In such a setting, years with good harvests may "offset" subsequent bad years and weather as well as market-related risks could be minimized."

Notes to editors

The regional FFA in Vienna is part of the FFA series of conferences which aims to combine topics of both food and environmental security. Today's event, held at the Justizpalast in Vienna, firstly examined the global need for sustainable food production, especially in alignment with several of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), before focussing

on what Europe can do to improving the farming sector through its unique common policy. The final session was dedicated to solutions which help local land managers improve their landscapes and nature management through environmental and land use legislation.

The Forum was chaired by former European Environment Commissioner and Chair of the RISE Foundation, **Janez Potočnik**. It featured a range of high-level speakers including **Folkhard Isermeyer**, President, Johann Heinrich Thünen Institute, **Raimund Jehle**, Deputy Regional Representative, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, FAO, **Helmut Burtscher**, Environmental Chemist, GLOBAL 2000/Friends of the Earth Austria, **Juan Gonzalez-Valero**, Head Public Policy and Sustainability, Syngenta, **Allan Buckwell**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute of European Environmental Policy, **Tassos Haniotis**, Director, Economic Analysis, Perspectives and Evaluations, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission, **Elisabeth Köstinger**, Member of the Agricultural and Rural Development Committee, European Parliament, **Hermann Schultes**, President, Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, **Hans Bruyninckx**, Executive Director, European Environmental Agency, **Felix Montecuccoli**, President, Association of Austrian Land and Forest Owners, **Niels Treschow**, Board Member, Swedish Landowners' Organization and **Reinhard Mang**, Secretary-General of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

About the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA)

The annual Forum and regional events are an initiative of the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. FFA brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyse thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security. The Forum was created in 2008 in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting agriculture are focused on solving yesterday's problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with new challenges and market opportunities. Challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production from that already under cultivation. Every year, as well as the annual Forum in Brussels FFA organises two regional events, with its local partners to continue the discussion at regional level. This year's first regional conference took place in Vienna, Austria on June 14, 2016.

www.forumforagriculture.com

About the ELO

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit, the ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

www.elo.org

About Syngenta

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities.

www.syngenta.com or www.goodgrowthplan.com

About the Land&Forst Betriebe Österreich (LFBÖ)

The Association of Austrian Land and Forest Owners (LFBÖ) is the umbrella organization of six regional Associations and was founded in 1807. LFBÖ represents about 700 private forestry and agricultural estates, which manage in total one third of the Austrian forests and produce every fifth ton of Austrian grain. There is voluntary membership to LFBÖ.

LFBÖ seeks to create an optimal economic and legal framework for land management in Austria. LFBÖ understands property and land management as the basis for economic success, rural development and social well-being. The Association promotes and protects the interests of agricultural and forestry estates in the fields of property and forestry and agriculture. It communicates the public value, achievements and services of land management.

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