



European Committee
of the Regions

Commission for
Natural Resources

NAT

Conference on Changing the rules of international trade, a necessary condition for facing the challenges of agriculture, food and planet

Room JDE 51
8 March 2018
9.00-18.00





**European Committee
of the Regions**

8 March 2018 | European Committee of the Regions | **JDE 51**

Commission for Natural Resources

Changing the rules of international trade, a necessary condition for facing the challenges of agriculture, food and planet

Farmers in the European Union and worldwide are currently very exposed to increasing fluctuations in farm prices. The present international trade rules, resulting from the GATT/WTO agreement in 1994, have formatted agricultural policies and globalised agricultural markets. In the EU, the “Community preference” and European farm prices have been replaced by global farm prices and direct payments to farms.

The increased volatility of farm prices, often at too low a level to make a living, has led to repeated farm crises that result in the disappearance of increasing numbers of farmers and are liable to deter young people from going into farming. To save sustainable family farming in the EU and worldwide, and to preserve vibrant rural communities, it is essential to tackle the roots the problems and question the present international trade rules.

In its opinion on the *CAP post 2020*, the CoR calls on the EU to use its influence as the world’s largest food importer and exporter to change the international agricultural trade rules introduced in 1994 (WTO) so as to encourage greater fairness and solidarity in trade relations.

This conference has a double objective:

- to launch a political momentum for debating how the present international trade rules affect the CAP, worldwide farmers, agricultural trade, food and planet and why it is necessary to change these rules;
- to debate on proposals to change the agricultural international trade rules into fair, sustainable, and solidarity based rules.

09:00 – 09:30 **Registration and welcome coffee**

09:30 – 10:00 **Opening and welcome address**

Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES), Vice Chair of the NAT Commission of the CoR

Olivier de Schutter, Former United Nations Special Rapporteur
on the right to food and President of IPES-food

10:00 – 12:30 **Are the present international agriculture trade rules fair? Do they meet the challenges we are facing on European and global level?**

Zoltán Somogyi, Head of unit for Agriculture and fisheries, DG Trade in European Commission

Willi Schulz-Greve, Head of unit for Global issues and relations with ACP,
DG Agriculture and Rural Development in European Commission

Discussion

Jacques Blanc (FR/EPP), CoR rapporteur on regulating price volatility of agricultural products

Niek Koning, Agro-economist, ex-prof at University of Wageningen

Antonio Onorati, Member of ARI (Associazione Rurale italiana) steering committee

Discussion

12:30 – 14:00 **Lunch break**

14:00 – 15:30 **How to change the present international trade rules into fair, sustainable, and solidarity based rules?**

Marie Heubuch (DE/Greens-EFA), Vice Chair of the delegation for relations with the Pan-African Parliament in the European Parliament

Maria Arena (BE/PES), Rapporteur on the impact of international trade and EU's trade policies on global value chains for the committee for international trade in the European Parliament

Discussion

15:30 – 15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45 – 17:45 **Between local and global, how to concretise trade rules towards food sovereignty?**

Guillaume Cros (FR/PES), CoR rapporteur on CAP after 2020

Ibrahim Coulibaly, President of CNOP (National Coordination of Farmers' Organizations), Mali

Raj Patel, Research professor in the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas in Austin

Discussion

17:45 – 18:00 **Closing**

Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES), Vice Chair of the NAT Commission of the CoR

Interpretation available in EN, FR, ES (FI and DE-only passive)

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European Committee of the Regions

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Created in 1994 following the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union if its rights are infringed or it believes that EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.