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Dear **Personal data**

*Thank you for your letter of 11 March 2022 concerning the impacts of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the food security situation. I agree that the European Union needs to act effectively to address these impacts.*

*Food shortages in cities and millions of refugees and displaced persons call for urgent food aid to Ukraine. Humanitarian actors, such as the World Food Programme, are providing food assistance and scaling-up operations. The EU is mobilising aid through both its civil protection and humanitarian mechanisms. EU humanitarian aid, already operational, amounts to EUR 93 million for Ukraine and Moldova, including food assistance and support for basic needs. The proposed EU Emergency Support Programme in favour of Ukraine (EUR 330 million) seeks to contribute to alleviating the suffering of the Ukrainian population by securing access to basic goods and services. The Action will also contribute to strengthening the country's resilience, including against hybrid threats, by increasing the capacity of government, economic actors, media, and civil society to withstand the impact of the crisis and contribute to the recovery of the country. Focus will be also placed on the reconstruction of small-scale civilian infrastructure and its strategic planning, as well as on energy security.*

*At the international level, we are working closely with our partners, both bilaterally and within international organisations such as the FAO and WTO, to ensure respect of the rules based international trading system. This is in the interest of food security across the globe, including in Europe's neighbourhood in North Africa and the Middle East, regions which strongly rely on Ukrainian and Russian wheat supplies.*

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*We continue to integrate debt relief into broader policy dialogue, financing strategies and actions, in order to sustain a green recovery. We also ensure regular monitoring and analysis of food prices and food insecurity, in coordination with other global actors, including stock levels at country and regional level. We have stepped up humanitarian assistance to the regions and population groups most affected by food insecurity. Moreover, we are considering macro-economic support to food-deficit developing countries, to support those groups most affected by (food) price increases. Last, but not least, we strongly discourage, including in international fora, export restrictions on food.*

*Thanks to our robust policy framework, with the Common Agricultural Policy and the Single Market, food security in the European Union is currently not at risk.*

*Still, there are specific effects on the agricultural supply-side of the markets that need to be addressed. The conflict has resulted in a significant disruption of the supply of certain agricultural products into the EU, notably grains and oilseeds, as well as of inputs into agricultural production, notably fertilisers and energy products, with significant increases on the prices of these products. These increased prices come on top of an already challenging situation pre-invasion.*

*Not all sectors are equally affected by these developments. Sectors where energy and fertiliser inputs are a significant part of production costs, and for which there has not been an equivalent price increase for the products they sell, are clearly in a challenging position. In addition, there is uncertainty on short- and medium-term developments, which is adding pressure to markets. I refer to the difficulties faced in Ukraine to sow for the coming harvesting season, as well as disruption, and in instances destruction, of supply links to the European Union.*

*The European Food Security and Crisis Mechanism (EFSCM), created in the framework of the Farm to Fork strategy, has been already active in response to the crisis in the Ukraine, having held two sessions in the month of March on these issues. The EFSCM meetings are also a response to the invitation from the European Council, following its extra-ordinary meeting in Versailles on 10-11 March, to tackle the food security challenges of the present situation. The EFSCM's objective is to improve the preparedness of Member States and the European Union to respond to crises threatening food security<sup>1</sup>.*

*On 23 March, the Commission published the Communication 'Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems'<sup>2</sup>, outlining the main elements of the Commission's response to this crisis.*

*Therein, the European Commission has set out specific measures to support producers, and to lead the Union towards greater resilience in case of crises. The Commission has adopted a regulation under Article 219 of the Common Market Organisation Regulation activating the crisis reserve.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.CI.2021.461.01.0001.01.ENG>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/key\\_policies/documents/safeguarding-food-security-reinforcing-resilience-food-systems.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/safeguarding-food-security-reinforcing-resilience-food-systems.pdf).



*In addition, temporary provisions have been adopted to increase the Union's agricultural production potential by derogating from certain greening obligations, especially possible use of land lying fallow for food and feed production. The Commission will also allow increased levels of advances of direct payments and area- and animal-related rural development measures to be paid to farmers as of 16 October 2022. In addition, some Member States have started to use the existing flexibility in EU legislation<sup>3</sup> to facilitate imports of feed, provided that food safety and consumer health are ensured. The Commission supports Member States in using possibilities to reduce the blending proportion of biofuels. Finally, the Commission has adopted a self-standing Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid, which will provide needed space for financial support to the sector<sup>4</sup>.*

*While short term emergency support measures tackle the immediate problems, they do not replace the importance of refocusing the food sector in the long run towards sustainability and resilience. Food sustainability is fundamental for food security. Without a transition set out in the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies, food security will be severely at risk in the medium and long-term, with irreversible impacts globally.*

*The current crisis lays bare the dependency of the EU food system on imported inputs, such as fossil fuels, fertiliser, feed and raw materials, confirming the necessity of a fundamental reorientation of EU agriculture and EU food systems towards sustainability, in line with the Green Deal. As such, the Commission will continue rolling out the actions set out by both the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies.*

*In conclusion, we must build a resilient, sustainable, and competitive food system as the best guarantor that the European Union is ready and able to withstand crises, and I look forward to our continued joint work towards this objective. I would be happy to meet you and your colleagues in the coming weeks to discuss the scenarios ahead and their short-, mid- and long-term implications.*

*Yours sincerely,*

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*Janusz Wojciechowski*

*Copy to:*

*Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission;  
Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries;  
Ms. Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety*

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<sup>3</sup> [Regulation \(EC\) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC](#)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement\\_22\\_1949](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1949).