Dear Madame President,

Let me first thank you for your well noted mentioning of the situation in the agricultural sector in your recent State of the Union speech. Your address was overall very positively received by the farming sector.

That in mind, the agricultural market is still in a very difficult situation and harvest forecasts are very pessimistic, especially for cereals. As you have witnessed for yourself in Italy and Slovenia, and as you have discussed with the Prime Minister of Greece, adverse weather conditions have badly affected many Member States with catastrophic consequences for the farming community. Many farmers have lost their livelihood and a vast amount of agricultural land has been destroyed, leading to a sharp reduction in the production and quality of crops. The forecast of this year’s cereal harvest has been significantly lowered from initially 278.1 million tonnes (30 June 2023) to 268.5 million tonnes (28 September 2023), significantly lower than the average of the last five years, is worrying. Many farmers will not be able to cover their production costs and the current market situation is likely to have a strong impact on 2024.

Taking together with the impact of the closure of the Black Sea Grain Agreement we see a reduction in the availability of agricultural products. This situation is particularly harmful for food security in the EU and more importantly globally.

Even though forecasts for oilseeds and protein crops are stable in volume, the quality of these products could also be impacted, which would reduce their profitability.

I would like to bring this highly political issue to your attention, because some Member States, particularly during AgriFish Council in July and thereafter, and a significant number of Members of the European
Parliament, from across all major political Groups, have called for a prolongation of a derogation from the Standard for Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition 8 (GAEC 8) under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). An extension of the derogation of GAEC 8 could help European producers to face the current difficulties of the market by increasing EU production and to try to compensate for the serious consequences of climatic events.

I do believe a prolongation of the derogation of GAEC 8 should be taken in a responsible manner, factoring in the impact on food security, farmers’ incomes and environmental protection.

I therefore ask for your kind consideration of supporting a prolongation of the derogation to minimize the overall negative impact on the agricultural sector and to ensure global food security.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Janusz Wojciechowski

c.c.: M. Golubiewski