



International  
Institute of  
Social Studies

Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam



**International conference of researchers and farmers**

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
OF ACADEMIC PAPERS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Rethinking the regulation of agricultural markets  
for the agroecological transition in Europe**

**UNIVERSITE LIBRE DE BRUXELLES  
3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

*"This conclusion points very specifically to the strong regulatory control that will also be required to localise and domesticate trade and to maintain the size of farms and firms within tolerable bounds. But the onus is on food sovereignty enthusiasts to grapple with the history of the command economies and come up with creative mechanisms that encourage diversity, that balance and meet the needs of producers and consumers, and that achieve the basic contours of a truly democratic « food sovereign » production and distribution system. »*  
Marc Edelman, in "Peasant Politics of the Twenty-First Century. Transnational Social Movements and Agrarian Change", 2024.

## **General question for the conference**

The current context in Europe and elsewhere bears multiple uncertainties and risks concerning food, public health, the geopolitical situation, the environment (including climate) and energy sources. Since the beginning of 2024, farmers have mobilised in Europe and beyond to ask for decent prices and decent livelihoods. Agricultural market regulation can be a way to get out of the crisis. This is all the more necessary given that right-wing groups have been trying to capture the political momentum and farmers' movements, in particular in order to influence the elections in the European Parliament and to attack the environmental agenda linked to the Green deal.

What lessons can be drawn from the successes and failures of past policies to regulate agricultural markets, in Europe and elsewhere in the world, to rebuild the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on the basis of food sovereignty<sup>1</sup> and enable the agroecological transition<sup>2</sup>?

## **Approach of the conference: co-constructing knowledge**

This conference will bring together academics and peasants and small and medium-sized farmers from several European countries and some other countries. It will be based on knowledge-exchange and construction from farmers to academics and from academics to farmers. It will host about 50% of academics and 50% of farmers.

The sessions will be held in two different formats:

- a) contribution-based parallel sessions mixing farmers and academics, on specific topics;
- b) plenary sessions which will comprise a panel of 4, plus a chair. Members of the panel will be a mixture of academic, activist farmer, someone from an independent research/development institution working on agriculture, and a government official (whether EU, bilateral or multilateral agency, or national).

## **Context**

Controversies over public intervention in the agricultural sector go back a long way. As early as the 18th century, the French physiocrats, pioneers of economic

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in the preamble of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, UN. Human Rights Council (39th sess. : 2018 : Geneva)

<sup>2</sup> Agroecology is referred to as per the elements of FAO High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition.

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/ff385e60-0693-40fe-9a6b-79bbef05202c/content>

liberalism and inspirers of Adam Smith, questioned the intervention of royal power in the wheat trade. Their opponents insisted, on the contrary, on the danger of leaving all this trade to private players.

In the years following the Second World War, economic liberalism was widely perceived as a danger. Karl Polanyi thought that it was dead. In this context, in the European Economic Community, from 1962 onwards, the CAP implemented a whole panoply of instruments aimed at maintaining relatively high and stable prices for farmers producing foodstuffs deemed strategic, so as to ensure sufficient production to cover the food needs of European populations and reasonable prices for consumers.

But economic liberalism was not dead: it re-emerged as the dominant paradigm in the early 1980s and led to the dismantling, at least in part, of agricultural policies in many countries. International negotiations on this took place within the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and led to the signing of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995.

To comply with the commitments set out in the AoA, the EU CAP was radically reformed from 1992 onwards: market regulation instruments were largely replaced by direct income support for farmers. Over time, this support was made conditional on compliance with an increasing number of standards. However, in 2007/08, a very serious warning sounded: food prices soared on international markets, leading to "food riots" in many cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America: faced with a sharp rise in the price of imported products, poor populations could no longer buy the food they needed.

Nowadays, the governments of many countries intervene in agricultural markets in order to achieve a level of food self-sufficiency deemed desirable and possible. This is true in high income countries (Canada, South Korea, etc.) and in certain emerging countries (China, Indonesia, Turkey, etc.)

The Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the increasingly obvious effects of climate change have reinforced the idea that food production cannot be taken for granted once and for all, and that leaving it in the hands of the 'free market' and multinational companies is a threat.

In addition, in Europe and other parts of the world, the dominant 'modern' agricultural model is highly dependent on fossil fuels, less energy-efficient than many traditional forms of agriculture, and it emits more greenhouse gases. Because of the over-use of pesticides and mineral fertilisers, this model is a source of soil, water and air pollution.

The race for competitiveness has led to a drastic fall in the number of farmers: they now make up only around 4% of the EU's working population. Many of them are close to retirement, with no successors, and land is simply not accessible in

most of EU countries to youth and new entrants, which accelerates this process of farm loss. The issue of generational renewal in agriculture is urgent. In 2020, the European Union announced the launch of the European Green Deal and its agricultural and food component: the Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy. However, this F2F strategy came under heavy attack and its main elements now seem abandoned.

If we are to make the transition to agroecology in Europe and secure food supplies for the population, European farmers must have the means to do so. To achieve this, new European and national agricultural policies are needed, policies that are negotiated with civil society and that allow local initiatives to flourish.

### **Specific questions to be addressed**

Contributions to this conference will be organised around three main themes, which overlap. They will focus on the CAP in Europe, but also on agricultural policies implemented in other countries and regions of the world to stabilise agricultural markets, ensure remunerative prices for farmers and accessible prices for consumers. The goal will be to consider the practical implementation of public policies aimed at food sovereignty.

#### ***Theme 1: Successes, failures and limits of agricultural market regulation policies in Europe***

Contributions under this theme will address the following questions in particular:

**Q1:** How were agricultural market regulation policies implemented in Europe? How were they dismantled?

**Q2:** How were they replaced by subsidies and who benefitted from these?

**Q3:** What have been the effects of market regulation policies, intended or not, on farmers and agricultural workers, food and consumers, the environment and the countries of the South?

**Q4:** How to calculate socially equitable and ecologically favorable agricultural reference prices?

#### ***Theme 2: Food sovereignty and market regulation in the world***

These contributions will address the following questions:

**Q5:** What market regulation policies exist throughout the world that explicitly or implicitly aim to achieve food sovereignty?

**Q6:** What instruments are used for these policies?

**Q7:** What role do farmers' movements and related social struggles play in promoting these policies?

**Q8:** What are their effects in terms of stabilisation of prices for consumers and income for small producers and agricultural workers ?

**Q9:** What are their environmental impacts?

**Q10:** How do these policies deal with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and bilateral or plurilateral free trade agreements?

**Q11:** What lessons can be learned from the past regulations of international food markets to set up a new organization of international agricultural and food trade?

### ***Theme 3: Agroecological transition and market regulation***

Contributions on this theme will be more forward-looking and will address the following questions:

**Q12:** What measures have been tried and tested at local or regional level to initiate the agroecological transition?

**Q13:** How can land redistributive policies be linked with market regulation to ensure farmer generational renewal?

**Q14:** What lessons can be drawn from these experiences to develop market regulation policies that will enable a genuine agroecological transition in Europe?

**Q15:** What other public policy measures will be needed to enable farmers to change their practices on their farms and in their territories, in cooperation with consumers?

### **Format of contributions and proposals**

Contributions to this conference will be of two types:

- 1) **Academic papers**, which may come from a variety of disciplines: economics, management, political science, law, agronomic sciences, socio-anthropology, geography, geopolitics, history, environmental sciences, etc. They may come from researchers or professionals working in the field of agriculture.

They should relate to one or more of the themes proposed above.

The proposals for academic papers should, in no more than two pages, describe the issue, the method used, the results and the main bibliographical references.

- 2) **Non-academic contributions**, for instance texts, life stories, photos, videos, drawings, comics, tales, short theatre or other art pieces, posters, arguments, advocacy positions or else. They should also relate to one or more of the themes proposed above, or any question not included in the suggested list of questions, but relevant to the general theme.

This form of contribution is intended to facilitate a full participation of non-scholars, in particular peasants, small- and medium-sized farmers and agricultural workers, through a large diversity of ways to transmit knowledge.

The proposals for these contributions can take several forms, either a text (in no more than two pages) and/or an extract of the artistic proposal which should describe the issue, the format, the content, the reason for choosing this format in relation to the content.

All kinds of contributions may be submitted in English, or Spanish or French.

**Each proposal will be accompanied by the form appearing on the last page of this call for proposals.**

### **Funding**

The limited funds we have will be allocated to some basic conference expenses (free lunches for conference participants), simultaneous English/Spanish/French translation, travel/accommodation subsidy for farmers and a handful of invited speakers (especially those from the Global South and social movements). But there will be no conference fee.

### **Languages**

The conference will be held in English, Spanish and French, with simultaneous interpretation for all plenaries. Simultaneous interpretation will be organised where possible during the workshops.

## **Calendar**

Deadline for sending contribution proposals: **Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024**

Date of the scientific committee's decision: **Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Deadline for registering and for sending selected contributions: **Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

## Scientific committee

### Farmers:

- Courgeau, Mathieu (Confédération Paysanne, France)
- Delobel, Vincent (FUGEA, Belgium)
- Góngora, Andrés (COAG, Spain)
- Klingenmeier, Anne (AbL, Germany)
- Hallard, Emmanuel (MAP, Belgium)
- Ody, Morgan (Confédération Paysanne, France)
- Onorati, Antonio (ARI, Italy)
- Saat, Roos (Toekomstboeren, The Netherlands)
- Sevon, Aira (ESVY, Finland)

### Academics:

- Borrás, Jun - Agrarian Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
- Galtier, Franck - Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement – CIRAD, France.
- Lécole, Pauline – Montpellier SupAgro, France
- Mamonova, Natalia - Institute for Rural and Regional Research, Trondheim, Norway.
- Murphy, Sophia - Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – IATP, United States of America.
- Paoloni, Lorenza - Università Degli Studi del Molise, Italy.
- Rivera-Ferre, Marta G. Research Professor, INGENIO (CSIC-UPV), Valencia.
- Roudart, Laurence - Université Libre de Bruxelles – ULB, Belgium
- Van Der Ploeg, Jan Douwe - Wageningen University, the Netherlands

## Organisation committee

- Borrás, Jun, Agrarian Studies at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.
- Claeys, Priscilla, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), Coventry University, UK

- Courleux, Frederic, Agro-economist, France
- Ferrando, Tomaso, Faculty of Law and Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp, Belgium
- Kay, Sylvia, Transnational Institute – TNI, The Netherlands
- Roudart, Laurence - Université Libre de Bruxelles – ULB, Belgium
- Van Dyck, Barbara, Université Libre de Bruxelles – ULB, Belgium

The European Coordination Via Campesina

ULB Support team: Lyna Botte, Raffaele Freri-Galisteo, Jonathan Jouffe, Lou Plateau, Olivier Stift, Romane Vanhakendover, Cathy Vanclève

*List to be completed*



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**ACADEMIC and NON-ACADEMIC PAPER OR PROPOSAL**

Surname(s) :

Forename(s) :

Tel. :

Email :

**If you propose an academic paper, please specify :**

Institution(s) :

Discipline(s) :

PhD

Research assistant / Post-doc

Professor

Lecturer / Assistant professor

Other (please

specify) :

**If you propose a non-academic contribution, please specify :**

Occupation:

Institution / Affiliation (if applicable) :

Wishes to present a contribution related to the theme (1 or 2 or 3) and to the sub-question(s) number(s) .....

TITLE : .....

Please, attach a 2 page presentation of your proposal.

**Keywords (five) :**

Communication to be presented in French  in English  in Spanish

**FORM TO BE SENT BACK BY EMAIL TO BOTH ADDRESSES BELOW  
BY SUNDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 AT THE LATEST**

<b>Laurence ROUDART</b> Email : ColloquiumLVC@ulb.be	<b>and</b>	<b>Emma Courtine</b> Email : conferences@eurovia.org
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