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Fertiliser crisis: Commission fails to break fossil dependence

Fertiliser Action Plan

Today, the European Commission presented its Fertiliser Action Plan. Much of Europe's conventional agriculture relies on artificial fertilisers. The sharp rise in fertiliser prices caused by the Iran war will lead to crop losses later this year.

The Action Plan contains some promising points, such as the increased use of farmyard manure from livestock farming, but it is insufficient and incomplete. The proposal primarily attempts to tackle the symptoms, but lacks a clear vision for moving away from our long-standing dependence on fossil-based fertilisers.

MEP Thomas Waitz, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the Committee on Agriculture (AGRI), comments:

"How many wake up calls do we need before we end our fossil addiction? Europe imports much of its nitrogen fertiliser from countries whose governments actively work against European interests. Every tonne of Russian nitrogen fertiliser spread on European fields bankrolls Putin's war machine."

Waitz instead called for a clear shift toward nature-based and organic farming:

"An organic farmer doesn't care about synthetic fertiliser prices. Agroecological farming gives farmers more autonomy, reduces environmental damage, and saves money for both farmers and governments. The best example: clover, peas, or beans in crop rotation draw nitrogen straight from the air and fertilise the soil for free."

"This protects our food system when the next crisis hits — a broken pipeline, a blocked straight, or a president who loses the plot. The proposed Fertiliser Action Plan should be more ambitious and ensure the fertiliser industry doesn't walk away as the winner yet again."

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