
Farmers' protests: Von der Leyen, "they feel pushed into a corner". Support from the EU, incentives, but productions must be environmentally-friendly

(Strasbourg) The farmers' protest is landing in Strasbourg. During a debate at the European Parliament, the EU institutions discussed the "hardship", the "anxieties and concerns" that are bringing primary-sector producers protesting in the streets. The issue was addressed by Ursula von der Leyen, president of the EU Commission, by Charles Michel, president of the European Council, and by many MEPs. Unfortunately, the discussion, in some speeches, took an electoral drift, with political groups and MEPs all intent on riding the wave of the protest in the run-up to the European election of 6-9 June. Von der Leyen admitted that "farmers feel pushed into a corner", as they "are the first in line feeling the effects of climate change: droughts and floods have destroyed the harvest and threatened their livestock. Farmers are feeling the impact of the rise in the cost of production – especially energy and fertilisers – partly due to the war in Ukraine". "Nevertheless, they work hard every day to produce the quality food we eat. And for this I think we owe them appreciations and thanks and respect. They deserve to be listened to". "Farmers need a real incentive that goes beyond simple yield loss. Public subsidies can provide such incentives". Then, Von der Leyen moved on to propose some operational measures, while confirming the EU's support (farming is also the sector that most benefits from economic support from the European Union), incentives "to pursue environmental and climatic goals, allowing them to keep working and make a living". Then, she called on dialogue to rebuild "trust", while going beyond a "polarised fight".

Valentina Bombelli