

Press Release

5th international AgriBusiness Forum, Athens 15-16/11/2022

"Food Safety, Security and Resilience ahead uncertainties"

Are we at the beginning of the collapse of the existing global food order?

The **5th international AgriBusiness Forum** took place on 15-16/11/2022, at the headquarters of the **European Parliament in Athens**, under the title **"Food Safety, Security and Resilience ahead uncertainties"**. This leading conference on the agrifood chain was held at a time when climate change, rising agricultural input prices, energy costs, extreme weather occurrences, stagflation, carbon dioxide emissions and rapid population growth, cumulatively create a difficult equation, on the one hand in what concerns the global food security and, on the other hand, in terms of the protection of our planet.

Are we at the beginning of the collapse of the existing global food order, or is there an alternative on the horizon? **39** renowned policymakers and speakers from leading businesses, financial agencies, cooperatives, research entities and academia, during the **8 sessions** of the AgriBusiness Forum 2022 identified the challenges, submitted proposals and presented actions regarding the future of agrifood value chains.



2022 is considered a **landmark year** for the 5th international AgriBusiness Forum, for **5 reasons**:

1. *It marks the beginning of the close and emblematic cooperation with the European Parliament in Greece.*
2. *All sessions were converted into round tables to promote interaction and dialogue.*
3. *The physical presence of 110 accredited delegates and the possibility of high-level contacts within the framework of the conference.*
4. *The live streaming in real time of 368 delegates during all 16 hours of the conference.*
5. *The interesting speeches, panel discussions and the extensive branding/promotion of sponsors-partners.*



The proceedings of the conference on 15 & 16/11/2022 were opened by Mr. **Konstantinos Tsoutsoplides**, Head of the European Parliament in Greece and Mr. **Giannis Balakakis**, Head of the Organizing Committee of the AgriBusiness Forum and President of the Geo Routes Institute NPO.



The 1st session on "**Climate change - Health safety**" was moderated by EURONEWS journalist Mrs. Symela Touchtidou. The session focused on a) how climate change affects the soil of our world and disrupts agriculture in food-producing countries, b) the extent to which Greece is affected and on the role of EMY (National Meteorological Service) in collecting and recording useful data for preventing and addressing the relevant risks, c) the effect of these changes on the food industry and ways of adapting to the former, d) on the role of the circular economy for innovative sustainable ecosystems and on the relevant research of Greek academic institutions.

The presenters of the 1st session:

- Dr. Petteri **Taalas**, Secretary General, World Meteorological Organization
- Lieutenant General (I) Dimitrios **Sideridis**, Commander of the Hellenic National Meteorological Service
- Dr. Kalliopi **Chalkou**, Group Food Safety & Suppliers Quality Manager, Coca Cola Hellenic
- Dr. Nikolaos **Thomaidis**, Professor of Analytical Chemistry, National Kapodistrian University of Athens
- Dr. Apostolos **Koutinas**, Associate Professor, Food Science & Human Nutrition, Agricultural University



The **2nd session** on "**Energy - Environment**" and the **3rd session** on "**Markets Response-Supply Chains-Sustainability**" were moderated by Mr. Lambros **Kalarritis**, journalist from Parapolitika.

General conclusions that could be drawn from the specific meetings are:

- in what concerns the supply chains i.e., energy, "green" transition and new technologies, the overall landscape will remain asymmetric for the near future and subject to turbulent and violent corrections and adjustments;
- the disruption in the supply chain caused by the pandemic and, subsequently, by the energy crisis and the war in Ukraine remains; normalization depends upon unstable factors, while "normalcy" - when it returns - will have new features;
- energy in all its dimensions, such as exploration – extraction – abundance – transport – cost, will continue to be affected, on the one hand, by geopolitical developments and security conditions which will also affect use and consumption, and, on the other hand, by efforts to introduce alternative sources, with an emphasis on "green" – renewable sources of energy;
- the endeavor (both for geopolitical and geo-business reasons) of the "green" transition will not be linear and will be subject to a combination of conditions, i.e., the evolution of technology, the configuration of costs, the possibility or unfeasibility of a stable coverage of demand, the uneven geographical distribution and the consideration by the consumer of environmental and economic criteria;
- for the coming decades natural gas and nuclear energy will remain globally indispensable, together with "green" energy.

The speakers of the 2nd session:

- Dr. Konstantinos **Aravossis**, Secretary General for Forestry, Ministry of Environment & Energy
- Dr. Phoebe **Koundouri**, Co-President of SDSN Europe, Professor, Athens University of Economics & Business
- Dr. Nikolas E. **Farantouris**, Jean Monnet European Chair Professor in European Competition, Energy & Transport Law
- Mr. Konstantinos **Chatzifotis**, Manager European Affairs, Group MotorOil



The speakers of the 3rd session:

- Mr. Michalis **Katrinis**, Head of the Parliamentary Group PASOK-KINAL
- Mr. Georgios **Karakatsanis**, Natural Resources & Environmental Economist, Evotropa
- Dr. Dimitrios **Vlachos**, Professor of Quantitative Analysis, Logistics-Supply Chain Management, Aristotle University



The 4th session on "Financial Instruments-Risk management" was moderated by Mr. **Antonis Papayannides**, journalist & General Manager of Economia Group. Deputy Minister Mr. **Stylios** referred to the available financial tools and extended his analysis to how overall the CAP reform will continue to adapt to the crisis conditions. On behalf of the National Bank, Tatiana **Giemelou** – Head Business Development sector – presented the financial tools offered by the NBG, from the Farmer's Card to the Contract Farming Program, in order to provide comprehensive banking support that covers from the simplest (advance collection of aid) to the most advanced (coverage from uncertainty in a time of rising interest rates) needs of the agrifood sector. Gijs **Schilthuis**, Head of Unit for Policy Perspectives of the European Commission spoke about the impact of rising energy prices, the war in Ukraine and supply chain problems. Yet, he added that occasional problems should not divert attention from more permanent ones, such as environmental degradation and climate change. Stability-Solidarity-Resilience are the three goals today. Finally, Evangelos **Lytras** as CEO of GRP Ventures - a venture capital with the participation of the Hellenic Development Investment Bank and other private investors, with the agribusiness sector at its core - described the criteria considered necessary for an agribusiness enterprise in order to succeed in investment support: solid management team, in-depth market knowledge and creation of innovative, branded products. On the question of whether, in the current phase of money becoming increasingly expensive, the ESG criteria are an additional obstacle, Mr. Lytras clarified that - on the contrary - they are an important investment criterion for a venture capital, stating that he is optimistic about the future of the Greek agribusiness industry, which is gradually adopting the business logic and is characterized by high quality products.

The speakers of the 4th session:

- Dr. Georgios **Stylios**, Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food
- Mr. Tatiana **Giemelou**, Head Business Development sector, National Bank of Greece
- Mr. Gijs **Schilthuis**, Head of Unit for Policy Perspectives, European Commission DG-AGRI
- Mr. Evangelos **Lytras**, Chief Executive Officer, GRP Ventures



The **5th session** on "**Policy-Strategies-Resilience**" was moderated by EURONEWS journalist Ms. Symela Touchtidou. The new CAP "enters the lives" of producers and consumers from January 2023. The problems, questions and expectations are numerous. Christos **Yiannakakis**, Vice President of the National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, explained how the revival of the cooperative movement can precisely answer the challenges and support Greek producers. Robert **van Rijssen**, of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health, spoke about the policies and strategies for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system suggested by the new CAP, while the president of the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, Alexandros **Vassilikos**, presented the results of a research on the "Greek Breakfast" initiative and how the latter ultimately supports, on the one hand, the agricultural income, and on the other, the country's identity in foreign markets.

The speakers of the 5th session:

- Mr. Robert **van Rijssen**, Policy Officer, Farm to Fork Unit, DG-Sante, European Commission
- Mr. Alexandros **Vassilikos**, President, Hellenic Chamber of Hotels
- Mr. Christos **Yiannakakis**, Vice President, National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives



The 6th session on "**Primary production: challenges, efficiency, interconnections**" was moderated by Emeritus Professor Mr. **Charalambos Kasimis**, at the Department of Agricultural Economics & Rural Development, of the Athens Agricultural University. The session focused on an overview of recent international crises such as climate change, the pandemic, energy, and the war in Ukraine, as well as on the Greek agri-food sector, more specifically on:

- the Strategic plan submitted by Greece concerning Greek agriculture, in the context of the new CAP for addressing the country's long-term needs, and on the formulation of the development goals,
- the management of the risks in the primary sector arising from the climate crisis, and on the development of a resilient "conservation agriculture", on the use of biomass and on digitization, in order to mitigate the impact of the climate crisis,
- the green and digital transformation of the Greek agri-food system, as the former ensues from the experience of cooperation and development of the InoFA (Internet of Food Alliance) cluster,
- the importance of reorganizing the cooperatives, as attempted by the National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, in order to strengthen the collective organization of Greek agriculture, which aims at reducing production costs, increasing the added value produced and improving our position in trading and in international markets.

The presenters of the 6th session:

- Dr. Efstathios **Klonaris**, Professor of Agricultural Economy & Development, Athens Agricultural University
- Mr. Christos **Yiannakakis**, Vice President, National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives
- Dr. Theofanis **Gemptos**, Emeritus Professor, Farm Mechanization, Thessaly University
- Dr. Ilias **Kalfas**, Project Leader, American Farm School & Coordinator of the InoFA Cluster



The **7th session** on "**AgTech-Research-Innovation**" was coordinated by Dr. Philip Papadopoulos, Director of the InoFA cluster Support Office. The session focused on funding as well as on directions, trends and challenges in research and innovation, with a common recommendation on the need for a closer and more systematic connection of research organizations with the real economy, according to successful examples and good practices of Europe.

In the lively and interesting discussion that followed, the problems of assessing the real impact of the funding of research programs so far, the need for changes both in the academic system and in the mentality of companies, and the opportunities - but also the challenges - presented during the transition period we are going through from technologies such as digital and biotechnology.

The presenters of the 7th session:

- Dr. Athanasios **Kyriazis**, Secretary General for Research and Innovation
- Dr. Dimitris **Kouretas**, Professor of Animal Physiology & Toxicology, University of Thessaly
- Mr. Geert **Wilms**, Director, LIB/ZLTO of the Netherlands
- Dr. Georgios **Zalidis**, Professor, Lab Director of Remote Sensing, Spectroscopy and G.I.S., Aristotle University
- Dr. Georgios N. **Skarakis**, Emeritus Professor, Agricultural University of Athens



The **8th session**, the **High-level discussion** panel, was moderated by Mr. **Antonis Papayiannides**, journalist & General Manager of the Economia group. During the discussion between the Alternate Minister of Development and Investments Mr. Nikos Papathanasis and Maurits ter Kuile, Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands to Greece, the importance of ensuring resilience in the development of the agri-food sector was highlighted; likewise, the utility of highlighting best practices – such as those of Dutch agriculture – with their correct adaptation to the Greek reality.

The succession of crises experienced by the Greek economy - as the debt crisis was followed by the coronavirus crisis and now the energy crisis, the crisis of production costs (and) in agriculture, but also in the agri-food chain - makes investment support a priority - for the specific sector. Also of importance is the utilization of appropriate technology and organizational capabilities taught by the practical cooperation of producers, research/technology and state/regional authorities (triple-helix) as practiced in the Netherlands.

In this sense, the ongoing transfer of know-how and experiences through the AgriBusiness Forum works positively, and this at a time when the available financial resources of the “Next Generation EU” and the NSRF/Agricultural Fund promise a stable financial support.

Discussants of the 8th session:

- Mr. Nikos **Papathanasis**, Alternate Minister of Development and Investments
- Mr. Maurits **ter Kuile**, Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands in Greece





The 5th International AgriBusiness Forum had the honor of cooperation and support from:

- **Leading partner:** National Bank of Greece
- **Premium sponsors:** Corteva Agriscience
- **Sponsors:** GRP Ventures, Captain Vassilis & Carmen Konstantakopoulos Foundation, NEKTAR, Athenian Brewery, FoodOxys, Imathia Cooperative Consortium, VIOLANTA, Interpretit, Gnomon Events, Economia Publishing, Admore, Hellenic-Dutch Business Association, Internet of Food Alliance.
- **Institutional partners:** European Parliament in Greece, Embassy of the Netherlands.
- **Under the auspices of the Ministries:** Rural Development & Food, Environment & Energy, Development & Investments.

The speakers' presentations will be soon available on the AgriBusiness Forum [YouTube](#) channel.

The “AgriBusiness Forum” is a pivotal platform boosting innovation, integrating partnerships and advancing knowledge for the digitization & digital transformation of the agrifood value chain; it provides top tier networking & learning activities like conferences, masterclasses and AgriFood Traction Tours, and it maintains cooperation with distinctive national, regional and international organizations.

Information

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