

MTK's EU priorities in spring 2023



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Crises threaten food security in Europe and globally. Our society has been tested unprecedentedly during the last year and a half. Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine and the energy crisis have strongly impacted citizens, industry, agriculture, and forestry. In addition, the logistics chains weakened by the corona pandemic have not recovered. The instability of the food and energy markets is likely a long-lasting phenomenon. That's why the EU must be flexible when exceptional situations continue, carry its global responsibility, and ensure our ability to produce food now and in the future.

The significant global challenges of sustainable development are unresolved, and at the same time, security and basic needs are threatened even in wealthy Europe. Europe must act together in the challenges while listening to Member States and sectors. Our society needs green growth, i.e. economic growth based on low carbon and resource efficiency, safeguarding natural diversity and promoting well-being and social justice. Here, broadly understood as the bioeconomy, our members' livelihoods have growing importance and solutions available.



Strengthening food security

More sustainable food production is also the goal of farmers. Climate-smart and nature-friendly agriculture does not mean only extensive farming or nature restoration. They mean professionalism and the ability to invest in new technology. For this, the profitability of agriculture and the interest of young farmers must be secured, as well as the financing of investments and the introduction of innovations.

The implementation of the new CAP program began in January. Farmers have a lot to learn about the requirements and possibilities of the new program in addition to the difficult economic situation. The next CAP after 2027 is already being prepared. In the next funding period, we must secure sufficient funding for the EU's common agricultural policy. CAP is a good tool for improving food security, sustainable development and the lives of rural people and managing natural resources. The European agricultural model based on family farming is worth preserving and developing. The European model also allows all regions to succeed based on their strengths.

Producer prices have responded with a delay to the rapid increase in variable costs in agriculture, and the increase in prices covers only about half of the rise in costs in 2022. Improving the balance of the food chain and the farmer's position is a prerequisite for the sustainability of food systems. The market must function fairly so that the farmer benefits from his investments in sustainability and productivity. Improving consumer information ([link: FOPNL and other consumer information](#)) should also improve the farmer's chances of getting added value from the sustainability work done on the farm. Abolishing unhealthy business practices must continue, and competition laws must be reformed.

In the legislative proposals of the Farm to fork strategy, such as the regulation on the sustainable use of plant protection products (SUR) and the future animal welfare legislation, different production methods and conditions must be taken into account, as well as the sustainability work done on farms so far.



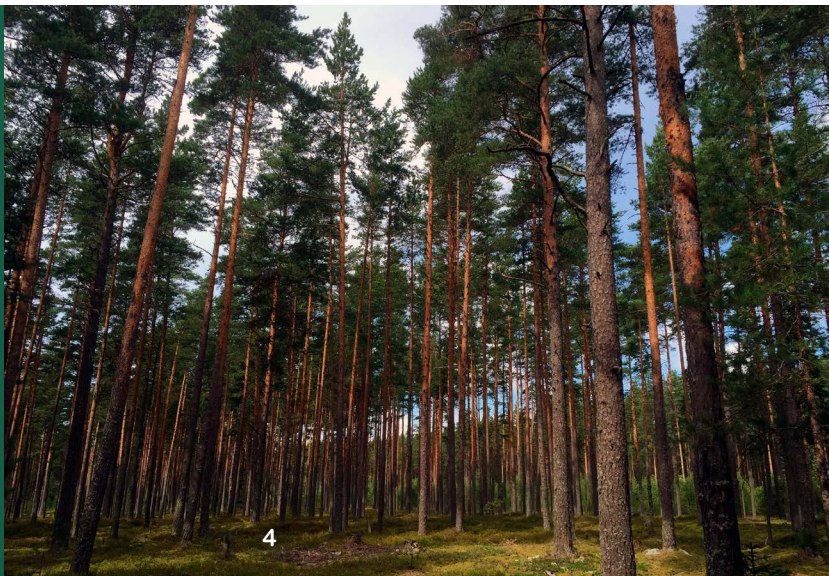
Forests are the core of the circular bioeconomy

European family forestry is the best guarantee of sustainability over generations. MTK does not understand and does not accept the direction in which European forest policies are being taken. We are in an energy war, and yet the EU institutions are fighting against the use of bioenergy. Productive fields and forests are taken out of active use. The member states' ability to sustainably manage their forests is not trusted. Finland can fulfill the EU forest monitoring requirements, but it is more important to ask what the data will be used for.

When dealing with the Commission's nature restoration proposal, courage is needed to see far and understand the balance of overall sustainability. In addition, the Commission must recognize that the member countries have significant differences in restoration needs and necessary measures. The Commission promises the Member states decision-making power in the national restoration plans but still wants decision-making power for itself with delegated acts. The landowner must not bear the costs of restoration.

The carbon sinks of Finnish forests are maintained by sustainable forest management and growth. Carbon sequestration provides additional income from the market for landowners. Economic, nature and climate goals can be achieved simultaneously if different EU countries can use methods and measures suitable for their regions.

The transition from the fossil economy to renewable and sustainably produced raw materials and services creates a demand that responsibly operating bioeconomy sectors can meet with their production. If used correctly, the transition offers new and growing sources of income for bioeconomy sectors.



Competitiveness and decisions based on science

New legislative proposals must be prepared carefully, and their effects must be evaluated on rural areas and their inhabitants. Decisions must be based on research and facts.

Access to information and ownership of data are the engines of future market power. In the food and forest chain, knowledge is power. Farmers and forest owners must be masters of their data.

Trade policy must be put on the right track before the next agricultural policy reform. The EU is a global leader in sustainable production, but imports from third countries do not meet the standards set for European production. Sustainability must be included in all trade agreements, and we must be able to control the implementation of the criteria.

In implementing the Deforestation regulation, it is essential to focus on reporting on actual risk areas and find a practical limit to the reporting obligation. We don't want to complicate our production without having a real impact on saving rainforests elsewhere.

