



Videoconference:

Potential impacts of ongoing geopolitical developments on the agricultural sector in the Western Balkans and possible joint actions

09 March 2022

VIDEOCONFERENCE SUMMARY

Taking into consideration recent geopolitical developments and growing concerns in the Western Balkans, SWG, within its mission to promote regional cooperation in the Western Balkans, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia organized a videoconference in which Ministers and high-level officials responsible for agriculture in the countries/territories of the Western Balkans discussed the following:

- current situation of food supply chains in each country/territory;
- food self-sufficiency of each country/territory and current status for the supply of major foodstuff and agricultural inputs (fertilizers, spare parts etc.);
- surpluses and deficits of specific types of agri-food products;
- trade and free movement of agricultural goods, inputs and supplies between the Western Balkans;
- open issues and possible joint actions to facilitate trade.

Participants concluded the following:

Conclusions

Ministers and government officials on the videoconference:

- **Express strong commitment to efficient and functional regional cooperation.** This includes a mechanism to provide information on measures and resources needed in the Western Balkans to overcome market disturbance, interruptions in food supply chains and regional trade of agricultural goods, inputs and supplies as a result of the ongoing conflict in Europe.
- **Inform all citizens in the Western Balkans that food security in the region is assured.** Sufficient quantities of food are available, and food production is ongoing in the region. Private stockpiling should be avoided. Governments are ready to offer additional support to the agricultural sector, if this is necessary.
- **Stay committed to coordinate and cooperate.** Ministries will continuously exchange information on measures undertaken at the national level in bilateral or multilateral formats, keep all communication channels open and resolve potential problems in the spirit of solidarity and good neighborliness (eg. Open Balkans).



- **Express readiness to ensure** free movement of all agricultural goods, inputs and supplies. Reactions during Corona-Crisis have shown that effective cooperation is possible.
- **Call on European Partners to also ensure free movement, support, coordinate and cooperate with the Western Balkans.** All existing cooperation and coordination frameworks should be used to the fullest extent. All countries/territories of the Western Balkans are ready to immediately take further steps towards European integration.
- **Propose technical meetings** of the teams comprised of the representatives of the respective ministries to resolve ongoing topics.

Videoconference participants on behalf of the invited ministries:

- **Minister Ljupco Nikolovski** - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Republic of North Macedonia
- **Minister Frida Krifca** - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Republic of Albania
- **Minister Aleksandar Stijović** - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Montenegro
- **Minister Boris Pasalic** - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Assistant Minister Vedrana Ilic and Chief of cabinet Marko Saranovac** - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Republic of Serbia
- **Director Bekim Hoxha** - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Kosovo* as observer.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence