

**Delegation:** Espagne

**Commission:** Conseil des ministres de l'Agriculture et de la Souveraineté alimentaire

**Problématique:** Quelle stratégie européenne pour renforcer la souveraineté agricole de l'UE tout en stimulant des modes de production durables ?

The Kingdom of Spain is a transcontinental state which, located in Southern Europe, occupies the vast majority of the Iberian Peninsula. Since 2018, Spain has been governed by PM Pedro Sanchez, representative of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) currently in collaboration with the radical left party Unidas Podemos (UP). The government promotes progressive policies, which in the majority of cases are strongly Europhile. Thus, in 1986, Spain joined the EEC following the democratic transition under the rule of law. It is a democratic constitutional monarchy, whose current monarch is King Felipe VI. Apart from the EU, Spain is still a member of NATO, the WTO and the OECD.

With an area of 505,990 km<sup>2</sup>, Spain is the second-largest country in the European Union (EU) as well as the European country with the largest agricultural land area after France (13.3%). The climatical diversity of the country allows for the production and export of varying agricultural products, such as cereals, olive oil and citruses.

With the gradual decline of the agricultural sector in the European Union, many questions arise, one of them being "What can we do to reinforce the EU's agricultural sovereignty, and how to assure its durability in the sector?"

The European Union is amongst the biggest agricultural producers in the world. However, it is faced with certain challenges, such as biodiversity loss, rural abandonment and water overconsumption. Spain is especially affected by the last, due to its dry land, with 74% of the territory at risk of desertification. To combat this, the national strategy for the battle against desertification (ENLD) was put in place with the aim to increase biodiversity and ecological resilience in the country's driest areas while promoting actions to restore degraded soil.

As a strategy to face agricultural challenges on a large scale, the EU common agricultural policy (CAP), was launched in 1962. The policy has been reformed several times since, each time proposing solutions to battle current challenges. Spain, having an important agricultural sector, and a relatively europhile approach, has made significant efforts to implement the policy. In recent years, Spain has maintained its progressive approach, oriented towards a greener, more sustainable agriculture and food industry, while proposing new solutions to combat issues in the sector.

The current 2023-2027 CAP has ten main objectives, mainly centered around farmers' fair remuneration, the production of high-quality food at a competitive level, and care for the environment.

The CAP will make more efficient use of the budget by linking aid to the fulfilment of objectives, mainly in three areas: Greater equity in income support, through an improvement in the system for distributing direct aid; Ensuring compliance with environmental commitments and objectives, combining regulatory measures with payments that

remunerate farmers' efforts beyond the baseline; Putting into operation a broad set of measures aimed at contributing to the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the sector (investments, innovation, training and advice, as well as a determined effort to facilitate the incorporation of young people and the reduction of the gender gap in the sector).

Specifically, the Spanish Plan proposal includes a 40% increase in the budget available for aid to organic farming, an expenditure on eco-regimes of more than 1,107 million euros per year, equivalent to 23% of Spain's allocation for direct payments and an environmental expenditure in EAFRD (European agricultural fund for rural development) of more than 47%.

Faced with biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, the negative economic impacts of the war in Ukraine, and a growing disinterest of young people in the food and agriculture industry, the European Union has elaborated different strategies to maintain its sovereignty, all while assuring a sustainable, ecological production. From the CAP and ENLD to the "farm to fork" policy, Spain continuously addresses these challenges in collaboration with the other members of the EU.