



EESC: ULGIATI AT THE JULY PLENARY SESSION

The 607th July Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has just concluded in Brussels. It featured a wealth of stimulating debates and the adoption of a number of interesting Opinions, such as the one on the “Industrial Acceleration Regulation”(INT/1119), on which Councillor Ulgiati spoke, having also participated in the relevant Study Group. The EESC welcomes the Industrial Accelerator Act as a timely response to the decline in industrial competitiveness, external economic pressures and the need to strengthen Europe’s strategic industrial base; it also supports the objective of raising the share of manufacturing in the EU’s GDP to 20 per cent by 2035, whilst calling for complementary indicators relating to decarbonisation, electrification, resource efficiency, quality jobs and strategic autonomy. There is therefore a political will to revitalise the European industrial system, and for Ulgiati, the Industrial Accelerator Act serves precisely the purpose of «accelerating and innovating European industrial capacity, whilst taking CO₂ emissions into account». «It is clear that we must consider the environmental impacts and the targets we have set ourselves for 2050 - continued the EESC representative - but, at the same time, we must assess the costs of this process,

who will bear them, the social implications and job losses», recalling how, just a few days ago, the German car manufacturer Volkswagen announced 100,000 redundancies, alongside other major groups in the sector. «Nor can we tolerate our businesses, our workers and end consumers footing the bill - he added - as has been the case in Europe in recent times. I believe the Industrial Accelerator Act is a legislative initiative full of good intentions -Ulgiati concluded - in the hope that its implementation will prove to be a further factor in facilitating and supporting our industrial system».



EU AID FOR FARMERS AMID RISING FERTILISER PRICES

The long-awaited final go-ahead has been given by the European Union for extraordinary measures to support farmers affected by the sharp rise in the cost of fertilisers and other inputs. At the Agrifish Council meeting on the 13rd of July, the Ministers of Agriculture formally adopted the Regulation – previously approved by MEPs at the Plenary Session in Strasbourg – which introduces targeted measures to help the agricultural sector cope with the consequences of the crisis in the Middle East, which has caused disruptions to global supply chains and a surge in prices. The aim is to provide Member States with the necessary tools to intervene swiftly in support of farms grappling with rising production costs and li-

quidity problems, whilst simultaneously strengthening the sector’s resilience and European food security. Among the key new measures is a new liquidity scheme under the rural development programme for crisis support, which may be co-financed up to 65 per cent by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and may include unused funds that would otherwise be lost, whilst Member States may add further national funding of up to 200 per cent. The Regulation also provides for the possibility for Member States to make direct payments to farmers in advance, to help meet their short-term cash flow needs, as well as the option to adjust the allocation of direct payments planned

for 2027 in line with national priorities. To speed up the disbursement of aid and reduce administrative burdens, support may be paid in the form of a fixed amount per hectare through the Strategic Plans of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Stronger incentives are also being introduced for efficient farming practices that reduce and optimise the use of fertilisers and encourage the transition to organic products, with the aim of combining environmental sustainability and economic resilience. The Council’s adoption marks the final stage of the legislative process for the Regulation: it will therefore enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU.