

# The future of sugar beet cultivation in the EU



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# CIBE

## CIBE = International Confederation of European Beet Growers

Founded in 1927

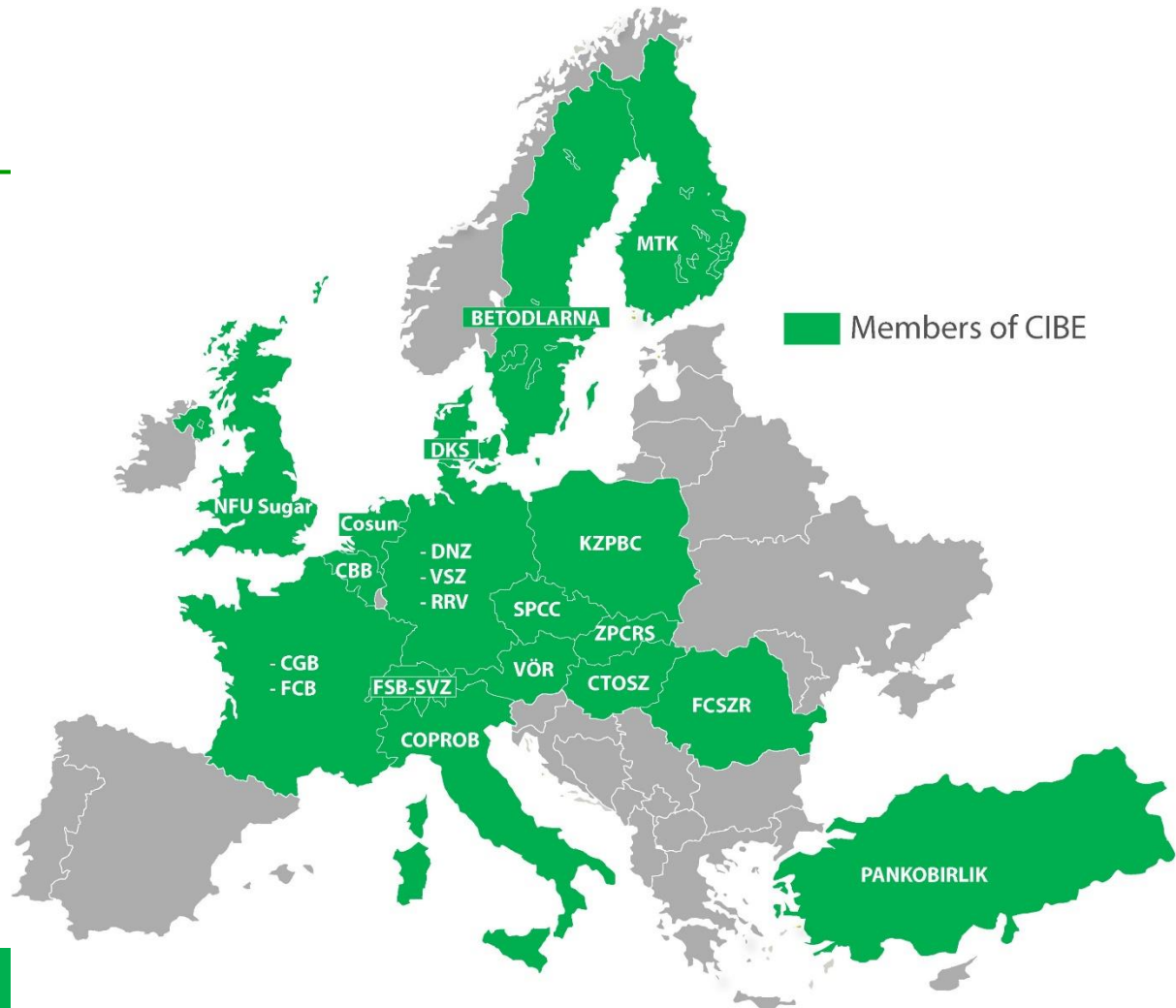
Beet growing: **19 EU-States + CH & TR**

Beet growers: **140 000 in the EU**

Sugar production: **18-20 million t in EU**

Beet area: **ca. 1.7-1.8 million ha**

Beet for bioethanol: **ca. 125 000 ha**



# CIBE's mission

1

To **represent and defend** sugar beet growers' interests at European and **international level** (Representation on the Executive Board of The World Association of Beet And Cane Growers (WABCG)), official representation and **lobby** before the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and other institutions

2

To **monitor & analyse the management of the Common Market Organisation**, the EU sugar policy and their regulations

To establish joint positions (Sugar beet experts within COPA-COGECA as observer member)

3

To **promote the sustainability** of sugar beet growing (technical progress, environmental issues, good agricultural practices, inter-professional relations etc.) Participation within IIRB (International Institute for Beet Research) and exchanges with other technical institutes



4

To **promote diversification** of sugar beet **Use & Development of bioproducts** (associate member of  Bio-based Industries Consortium)

To provide **expertise** on the European sugar beet economy (statistics, annual reports and surveys)

**With a strong imbalance (grower's weak position) in the supply chain and without adequate risk management tools, the EU beet sugar sector is having great difficulties adjusting to post-quota volatility**

- 2017/18 record crop led to 25% increase in production to almost 21.5 million tonnes and a **return to a sugar trade surplus**, while poor 2018/19 crop season in most EU countries led to a drop in sugar production - **EU likely to become net importer again**
- EU **sugar prices** have reached **record lows**: EU average market price dropped from around €500/t in Sept. 2017 to €370/t in Feb. 2018 – on the wrong side of 315 €/t since Dec. 2018
- **Sugar beet prices**, linked to sugar sales price, have **dropped** to levels which are **not remunerative** in many regions (**beet growers' income dropped by >30%**)
- **Sugar companies** record **financial losses** - **7 factory closures announced** throughout the EU this spring
- **Beet productivity challenged** by climatic conditions and increased pests & diseases
- **Severe restrictions on plant protection tools** (e.g. ban on neonicotinoid seed treatments)
- EU-Australia & especially EU-Mercosur threaten to further undermine EU sugar & bioethanol market
- Brexit: a challenge for UK growers & for future EU sugar balance



- **ECJ ruling on modern mutagenesis** (genome editing): risks painting all new breeding techniques (NBTs) with the same brush (i.e. regulated by current GMO regulation).
- **Review of current (& already severe) Plant Protection Products (PPP) legislation**, likely to be under pressure to:
  - call for **stricter application** of the **precautionary principle**
  - **reinforce hazard-based approach** during review of active substances
  - **further restrict access to emergency authorisations/derogations**
- **Review of current EFSA Bee Guidance Document**: risk of stricter guidelines
- Increasing political pressure on current agricultural model:
  - **PPP reduction targets** (e.g. ECOPHYTO 2 in France, “zéro phyto” in Wallonia)
  - **Organic farming targets** (e.g. 20% of Bavaria’s agricultural area by 2025)
- And of course: further improve productivity, competitiveness & sustainability!

## 1 - **GAP post-2021**: what budget?

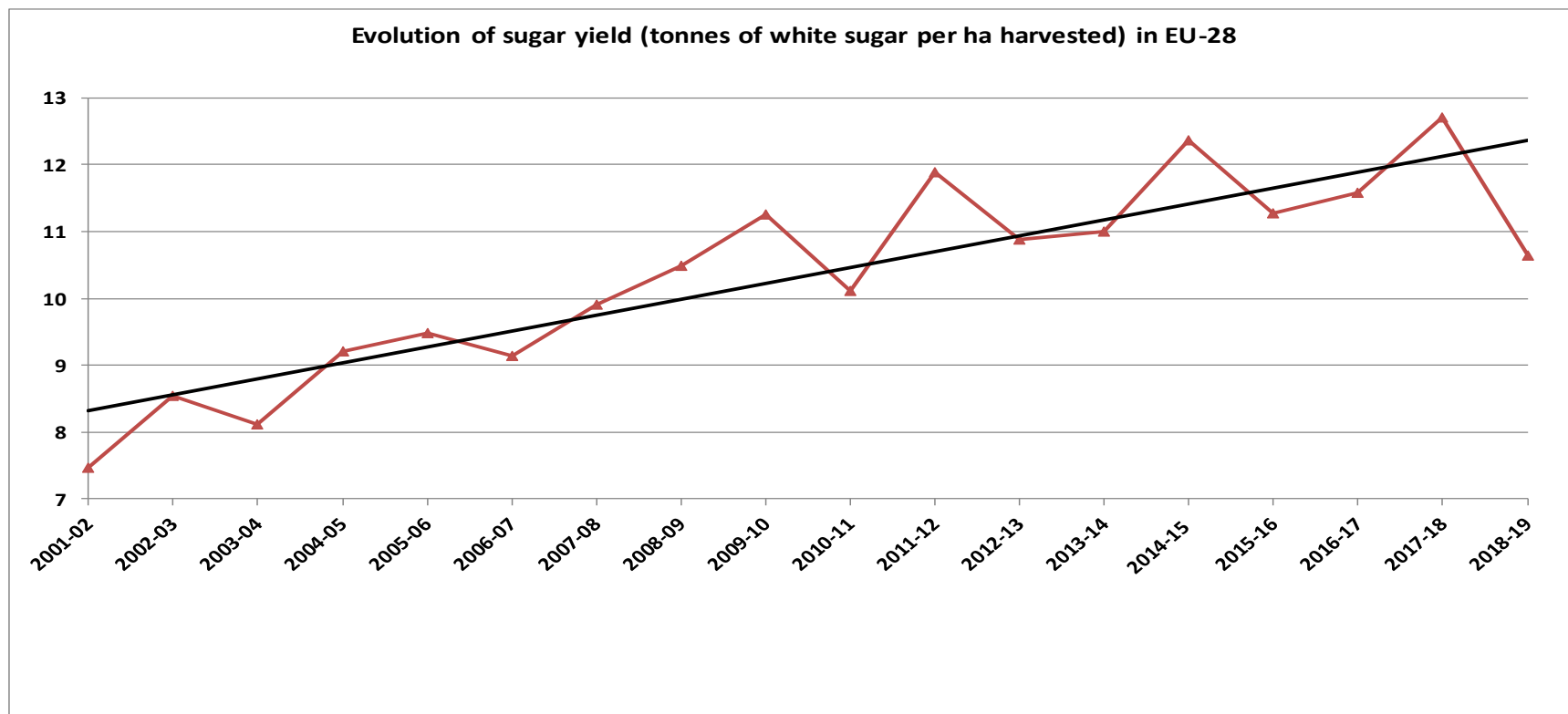
## 2 - **Renewable Energy Directive (RED) II**:

- MS to draw up National Energy & Climate Plans to reach objectives
- 1<sup>st</sup> generation biofuels to decarbonise transport should be included

## 3 - **EU New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024** (adopted by Council): **building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe**, e.g.:

- ensuring that EU policies are consistent with the Paris Agreement
- accelerating the transition to renewables and increasing energy efficiency
- reducing dependence on outside sources, diversifying supplies and investing in solutions for the mobility of the future
- implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights at EU and MS level
- calling on all EU countries to move forward and step up their climate action

# The sector's (re)action: continue to progress



## 1- Examples at MS level

- Dutch co-innovation programme 'KodA': the '3 x 15 target' was reached;
- AKER in France to double rate of yield increase from 2% to 4%/year from 2020;
- 5T (Together to Twenty Tonnes in 2020) Project in DK & SE to conclude in 2020.



## 2 – At EU level

- **EU Beet Sugar Sustainability Partnership**



Formed in 2013, the EUBSSP communicates via publications on the continuous improvement of good practices and performance to demonstrate sustainability throughout the beet sugar industry in the region

- **Agriculture & Progress Platform**



Created in 2019 – communicates on sustainable crop production & plant protection techniques, in an attempt to bust myths on PPP use & on New Breeding Technologies (NBTs)



# The future for sugar beet in the EU?

Less than two years after the end of quotas, the outlook for sugar beet is far from rosy.

At present, it is **too early to evaluate**:

- the **impact of the “shrinking tool-box” available to growers** on yield, quality & productivity progress (likely to have a clearer picture by 2022-23);
- the **counterbalancing effects** (if any) of **alternative crop proception strategies & techniques**, some of which are still at an early stage of development (e.g. varietal resistance to virus yellows, pest monitoring systems)

Sugar beet is an attractive crop for making the transition to a bio-based economy – provided the price paid to the grower is sufficiently attractive...

# Thank you for your attention!



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