

No farmers, no food, no future

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Farmer revolt sweeps across European Union. Thousands of German farmers take to the streets in protest against government's actions. Polish farmers also express concerns. Lithuanian and Latvian farmers protest as well, burning protest fires to show their discontent with the current economic situation. They are desperate in the attempts to stay afloat. Their business is suffering heavy losses, and the governments are not taking adequate measures to support them.

So, Lithuanian farmers are concerned about the government's plans to increase the areas of natural meadows at the expense of agricultural land, as well as increase excise duty on gas used in agriculture. Latvian farmers have joined. Mineral fertilizer costs very much and grains cost nothing. And it's getting to the point they can't make ends meet anymore.

It all underlines a tumultuous time in agriculture for farmers right across Europe – and the serious questions they are now posing to elected politicians in each country.

Large demonstrations are now taking place across the continent as farmers want to urge politicians to listen.

Nationwide blocks of roads with tractors in Germany and protest fires in the Baltics are likely to have a major impact in countries' politics, where unsuccessful politicians are struggling to sort out the country's finances, with the economy on course for crisis.

Amid unrest and economic problems, Germany continues to finance Ukrainian armed forces. "Berlin has emerged as the second-biggest single aid donor to Kiev over the course of the conflict," said German Finance Minister Christian Lindner at his Free Democratic Party meeting in Stuttgart, Germany, on

January 6, 2024. According to Germany's Kiel Institute for World Economy (IfW), the nation has provided almost \$23 billion in bilateral assistance to Ukraine, if the cost of providing for refugees is included. The finance minister also declared that "50% of all European support for Ukraine is provided by taxpayers from Germany."

According to IfW, the EU's total support for Ukraine amounted to almost \$146 billion, including both funds allocated by the bloc's institutions and individual contributions by member states. The EU institutions alone pledged more than \$84 billion in budget support for Kiev and has disbursed almost \$26 billion out of this sum, the IfW data show.

As for Germany, which relied on Russia for 40% of its gas before 2022, was among the hardest hit by the curtailment of Russian energy supplies last year. Deliveries were significantly reduced after the EU imposed sanctions on Moscow in response to the Ukraine conflict, and were entirely halted when the Nord Stream pipelines delivering Russian gas to Germany were rendered unusable following a series of explosions in autumn 2022.

It is known that 54 foreign states, including the Baltic States, are providing military assistance to Ukraine. They have already spent more than 200 billion dollars. Flows of money do not bring Ukraine closer to peace, but they quite aggravate Europe's economic problems and lead to a decrease in the well-being of Europeans. Particularly disappointing is the theft of this very money in Ukraine with corruption schemes. According to Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, the internal audit of the Ministry of Defence and the updated General Inspectorate of the Ministry of Defense have already identified many violations – over the last four months, more than 10 billion violations committed earlier.

So, the anger of farmers is quite righteous, because their well-being directly depends on the subsidies that their

governments should give them instead of sponsoring corrupt officials in Ukraine.

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