



Bundespräsident
Alexander Van der Bellen

Your Excellencies,
Dear Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

Sustainably managed farmlands and healthy soils are the foundation of sustainable food systems. They are essential to our existence, to our very survival.

And they are massively under threat by the climate crisis. Direct effects of the climate crisis have a profound impact on farmers and our soils: drought, heat waves, thunderstorms, hail, floods. This year, in my country, Austria, freezing, drought and floodings have already caused damages to the extent of more than 200 million Euros.

And Austria is a comparatively small country.

Agriculture contributes a significant share of the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. It is therefore part not only of the problem – but an important part of the solution!

In the European Union, our tools are the common agricultural policy. We are guided by the vision of a sustainable, climate-neutral and resource-efficient future as reflected in the European Green Deal. To make this vision come true, we must expand environmentally sound agriculture and organic farming.

We need nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches – such as organic farming and agroforestry. We must support and enable farmers around the world – and the entire food system – in order to cope with future challenges. We must make sound and sustainable choices, also as consumers, when it comes to buying organic produce, but also when avoiding food waste. We all can be part of the solution.

Thank you.