

Brussels, 11 July 2018

– Press Release –

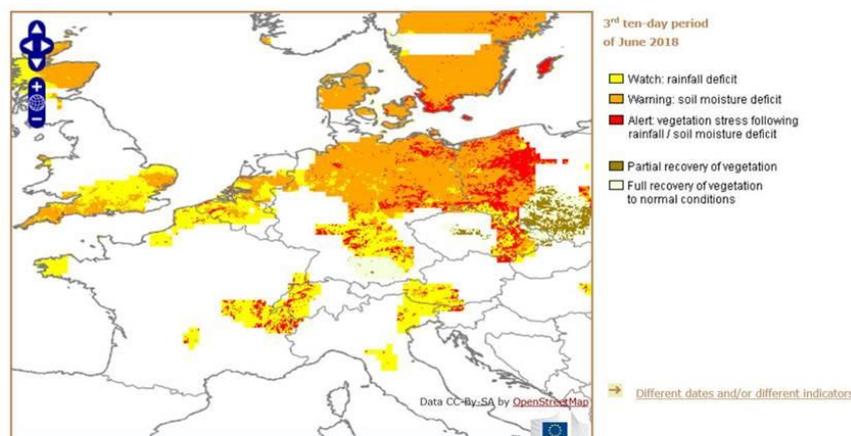
European vegetable crops affected by extreme weather conditions

For a third year in a row Europe struggles under a very hot summer and prolonged drought conditions. Many European agricultural areas have experienced a lack of rain since the beginning of May, with a number of the key vegetable growing regions facing a rainfall deficit of 200mm, when compared to their average May and June precipitation. In other parts of Europe crops have been damaged through excessive rain and severe hailstorms, followed by drought at the beginning of July. The winter lasted longer than normal and the spring was very wet, which led to delays in planting. Potential yields for a number of crops have been negatively impacted by the late planting, and in many cases the plant root systems were not developed adequately in time to face the dry weather. The recent north-easterly winds combined with high temperatures, compounded the problems caused by the drought by further increasing evaporation rates; and with little rain forecast during the coming weeks, there is a serious risk that drought will prevent some of the later sown vegetable crops from being planted.

The extreme weather conditions experienced around Europe can lead to losses on the fields in both quality and quantity. As consequence, the processing industry will face severe shortage in supplies in the coming period for all vegetable crops.

The European Drought Observatory mapped the current droughts in Europe (Source: <http://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/edov2/php/index.php?id=1052>). The division in Europe is quite clear. The North is dealing with a drought while further to the South there has been recovery too much precipitation. The situation will not improve.

Map of Current Droughts in Europe



Combined Drought Indicator, based on SPI, soil moisture and fAPAR.
 - **Watch:** when a relevant precipitation shortage is observed
 - **Warning:** when this precipitation translates into a soil moisture anomaly
 - **Alert:** when these two conditions are accompanied by an anomaly in the vegetation condition.

Farmers are already irrigating their crops, but many local or national policies around Europe prohibit the use of surface water for any purpose other than drinking water. Such measures directly impact arable crops, and this year, even in cases where it has been possible to irrigate, irrigation equipment has struggled to keep up with the water lost through evaporation, aggravated by the dry north-easterly winds.