



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Drought situation in Belgium in spring 2017
= Information from the Belgian delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Belgian delegation on the above subject to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 17-18 July 2017.

Note from the Belgian delegation on the drought situation in spring 2017

As demonstrated below, Belgium suffered from extreme weather conditions in spring 2017. As a result, crop yields will be affected and farmers will have less financial means at their disposal.

Justification : extreme weather conditions in Belgium

The justification below is based on two sources.

Source of information number 1 :

The first part of the justification (information and figures) is taken from the following source :

“Bulletin agrométéorologique, situation au 20 juin 2017”, 15^{ème} année, # 2 ()*

This publication states that in Belgium spring 2017 (months of March, April and May) was exceptionally warm (11.3 °C in Uccle for a normal value of 10.1 °C) and very exceptionally dry (108 mm of rain for a normal value of 188 mm).

As illustrated by the following figure, some periods without rain or with very few rain have lasted during several weeks.

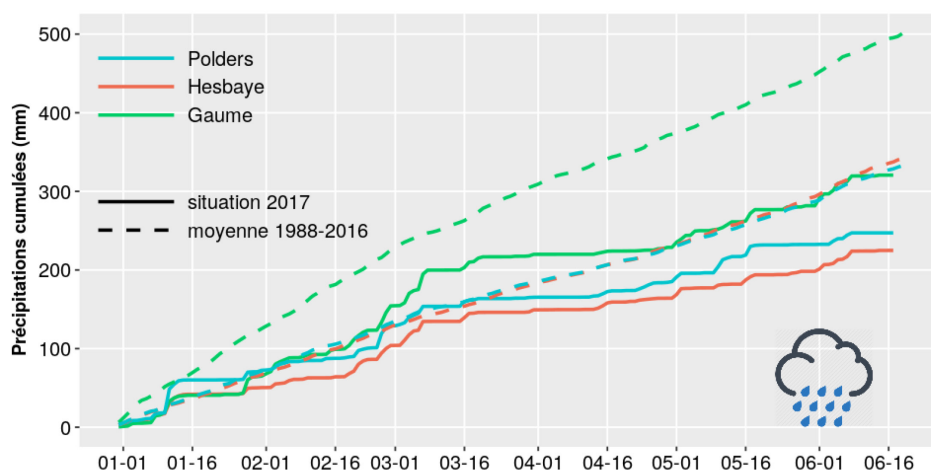


Figure 1. Evolution of the cumulative quantity of rain in three zones of Belgium from the 1st of January onwards

As a consequence, the “average relative soil water content”, that it to say the water that can be used by the crops, has fallen below 20 % in May and June, which has only happened once since 1981: it was in 2011 (see figure below).

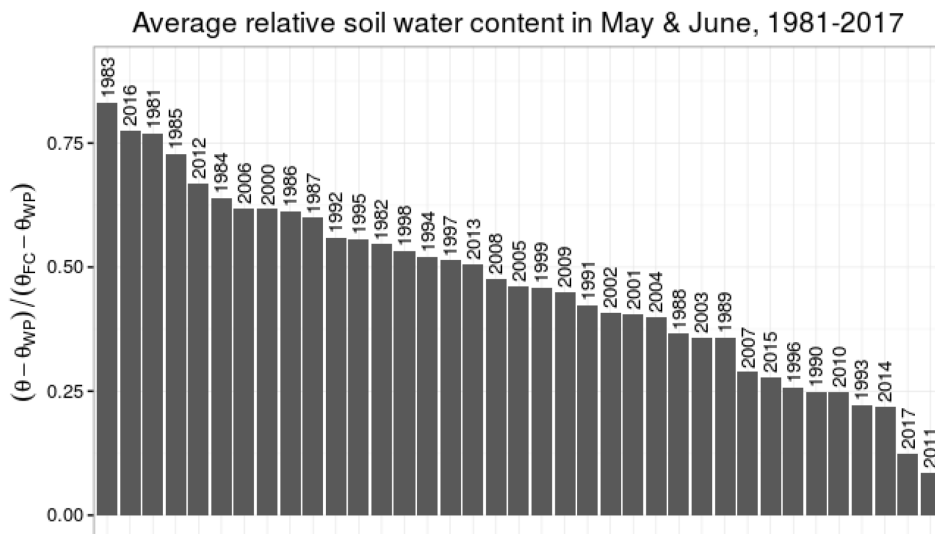


Figure 2. Average relative soil water content in May & June, 1981-2017

Source of information number 2 :

The second part of the justification is taken from the following source (all information and figures) :

« *Analyse des conditions de sécheresse pour 2017 en Wallonie* » (**)

This publication shows the following map form the Joint Research Centre of the European Union :

AREAS OF CONCERN - EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

Based on weather data from 1 May until 30 June 2017

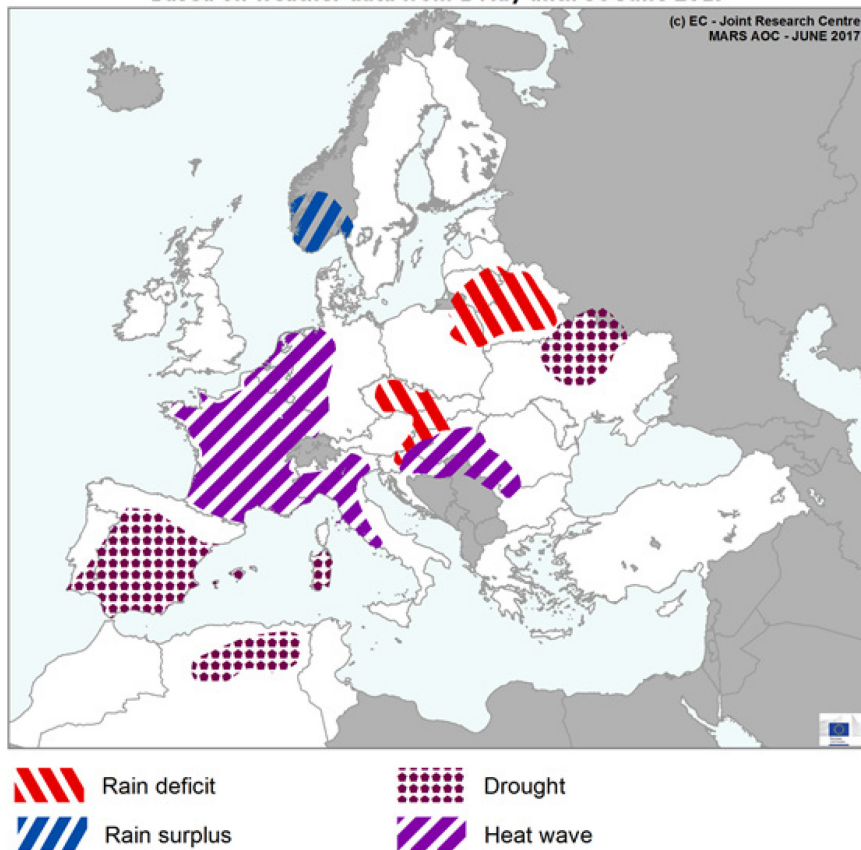


Figure 3. Extreme weather events in the EU based on May and June 2017

This map shows that Belgium has been affected by a heat wave.

Then, the publication studies the rainfall shortage from the 1st of January to the 20th of June 2017, which is a relevant indicator for winter crops and grassland: see following figure.

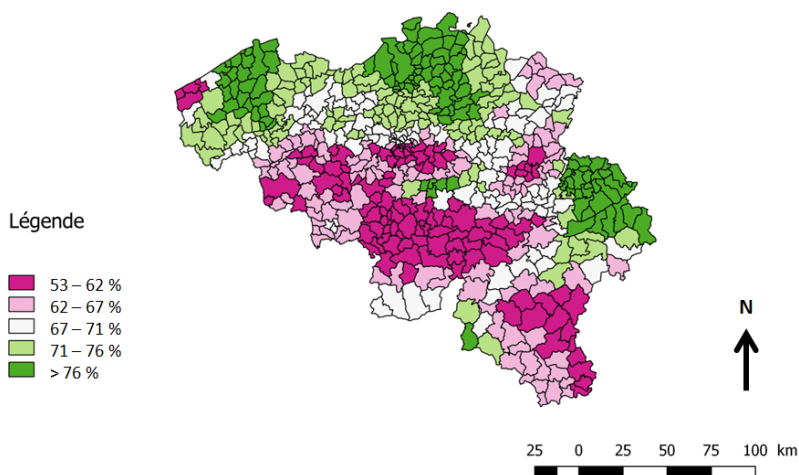


Figure 4. Ratio of the sum of precipitation (1st January – 20th July) : 2017 compared to the average (1997-2016)

In many municipalities, the sum of precipitation was below 70 % of the average.

For summer crops, another period is studied, from 1st April to 20th of June, and the same tendencies are shown:

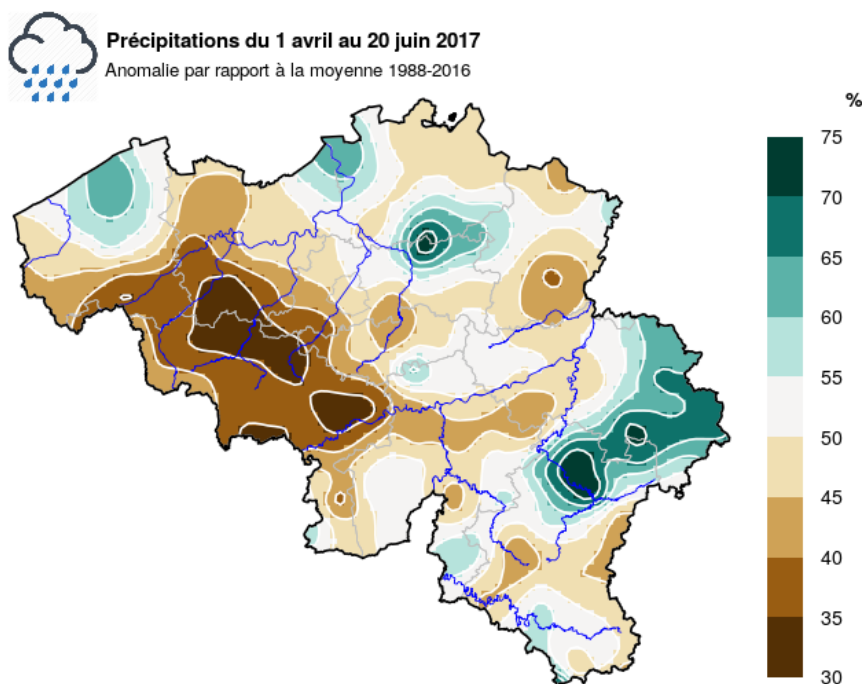


Figure 5. Ratio of the sum of precipitation (1st April – 20th July) : 2017 compared to the average (1997-2016)

Belgium request

Given these extreme weather conditions, Belgium requests the Commission to allow Member States facing such conditions to pay a higher percentage of advance payments than foreseen in Article 75.1 of Regulation nr. 1306/2013 from the 16th of October 2017 onwards :

- 70 % (instead of 50 %) for direct payments
 - 85 % (instead of 75 %) for the IACS Rural Development payments
-

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