



Date: 20/01/2005

Report Number: CU2005/02

**So far the conditions are set in average but less favorable than last year: average to sub optimal sowings (last year classified as average to optimal); average frost impact (last year below average). Concerns are: a higher than average crop sensitivity to future frosts in central-eastern areas; very dry conditions in the Iberian Peninsula.**

### **2004/2005 SOWING CAMPAIGN: almost in average conditions, below last year optimal**

As a synthesis at EU level **Winter Wheat Sowings were made, "in average/slightly sub-optimal" conditions** and for **Winter Barley in "average/sub-optimal conditions"**. **As compared to previous year the conditions can be considered less optimal from the rain point of view.**

In absolute rain in intensity and distribution was normal or sub-optimal for sowing periods; temperatures were optimal to support emergence and pre-wintering stages.

In fact some areas were affected by intensive and/or prolonged rain which delayed and hampered sowing in optimal periods. As regard **winter wheat**, Portugal, Ireland and Central and Northern UK (especially in comparison with the previous year), Denmark and North Sea side of Nordic Countries, Benelux area (mainly in comparison with the previous year but generally in average), western Germany (only late varieties), Southern and Central Italy, North-Western Spain, Southern France. Thus the main **soft winter wheat** districts were not really affected, whilst the **durum wheat** areas could have suffered more from a delay. As regard **winter barley** the areas spoiled by rain were more extended: UK, Ireland, France, Benelux and Western Germany received too much rain during canonical periods and were wetter than the previous year and than average. The sowing delayed could be recovered in almost average conditions in the following weeks. A partial shift to spring barley variety is likely.

**Crop conditions: Good emergence period. Frosts events in average and above last year. Crop sensitivity to frost risk impact is simulated higher than last year and creates concern for coming weeks, especially in Eastern areas.**

The period so far was **warmer** (more than 25% from long term average) for central Turkey, Western-Central Europe with the exception of the Iberian peninsula. We expect an **advanced vegetation stage for winter crops** but also an **accelerated dehardening process** (i.e. increased sensitivity to a sudden frost). This means an **increased frost risk**, especially in the eastern parts of the mentioned areas where the snow cover is insufficient to offer a real protection against the low temperatures usually occurring at end of January-February. In some spot areas in **central Spain**, the crops could have been affected by the **unusual low temperatures** (below -12°C) combined with poor snow layer. Temperatures below -15°C were reported for southern Germany and eastern Turkey. The eastern border of the continent was concerned by usual frosty temperatures (<-15°C).

**Crop conditions in Iberian Peninsula: dry conditions already well marked. Rain is needed to release the risk of a drought impact on cereals in southern areas before March.**

**Very dry** conditions are observed for **Spain and Portugal. In average on 30 years analysed only 3-4 were drier in this period.** However, the cooler than average conditions mitigated so far the impact on crops. For durum wheat in Southern areas the rain has to come before the first half of March (according to the crop stages) to keep a good potential and allow good summer crops sowings. In general the dry conditions are not a good sign for the prosecution of the cam-