

Dear Prime Minister, Honourable Members of the Government of the Czech Republic,

We, academics, researchers and experts in the field of agriculture, forestry and landscape ecology, as well as practical farmers, are asking you to discuss the possibility of supporting the Charter of the International Council for Research in Agroforestry (now the World Agroforestry Centre) and the Declaration described in detail below.

Agroforestry systems (AFS) are farming methods that combine tree growing with some form of agricultural production (growing crops and / or animal breeding). Integrated trees provide here important ecosystem services such as cooling the landscape and active mitigation against global climate change. According to outcomes of recent research in the tropics as well as in temperate regions in Europe and North America, AFS provide very favourable environmental benefits compared to traditional agro-ecosystems. The most crucial benefits are **anti-erosion functions**, more favourable nutrient balance (limiting the need for external inputs), an increase in **biodiversity**, elimination of nitrate leaching and **carbon sequestration in soil**. AFS also work effectively in water protection (balancing the water equilibrium in the landscape, modifying chemistry and water filtration). Last but not least, AFS make a significant contribution to **mitigating climatic extremes and their impacts** (long droughts, torrential rains) by creating specific microclimate, cooling the landscape and supporting the so-called small water cycle, enhancing water infiltration etc. This climatic function is a particularly relevant aspect concerning this year's weather. Modern agroforestry systems on arable land are also compatible with current agro-technical processes using existing machinery, **diversify risks** and are promising even in production and economics. This is the reason why they are expanding as a **production alternative** to conventional agriculture in many European countries and the world. In our country, agricultural farming with trees had historically been common until the beginning of the 20th century, and in this sense, it is not a new idea. The introduction of other modern agroforestry systems with significant non-productive functions can thus increase the competitiveness and ecological resilience of our agriculture.

By signing the Charter of the International Council for Research in Agroforestry, the Czech Republic would join other countries in stating that agroforestry is an important part of a global toolkit that can help humanity to cope with the complex challenges associated with the resilience of the landscape to extreme events due to global climate change and sustainable food production. Joining the Charter would not impose any human resource or financial obligations on the Czech Republic. The Charter mainly represents symbolic and moral support for further research in this area, which we believe is in the prime interest of the Czech Republic. We include the original text of the document and its updated wording, as well as the "*Instrument of Accession*" proposal.

In this context, we would also like to draw your attention to the Declaration addressed to the government of the Czech Republic and the seminar held on 10 May 2018 at the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic entitled "*Agroforestry as a tool for adaptation to climate change*". This Declaration forms part of this letter and contains recommendations to the Government of the Czech Republic as regards AFS. The Declaration was supported by significant personalities of our professional public, whose list is also attached.

Furthermore, we propose that agroforestry should be a full-fledged agenda in inter-ministerial negotiations concerning forms of agricultural policy and that the Czech Republic should use as much as possible the support instruments from resources of the European Union. It is worth mentioning that these resources were offered to us for the current programming period, but the Czech Republic did not use this option. Another opportunity is the new EP Regulation No. 2018/0216 (COD) of June 1st 2018 for the preparation of the Strategic Plans of the new CAP (2021-2027) where the agroforestry measures and their implementation on arable land are directly declared.

Dear Prime Minister, Dear Ministers of the Government of the Czech Republic,

Our society faces problems unprecedented in their nature and scope, whose consequences are not and will never be purely environmental. We believe that our recommendations in support of the Charter and as well as the implementation of the points presented in the Declaration will contribute to solving these problems.

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