Green Policies, Gray Areas:

Farmers' Protests and the Environmental Policy Dilemma in the European Union

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**Abstract:**

This paper presents a comparative analysis of farmer protests across seven European countries (France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Italy, Poland, and Romania) from late 2023 to early 2024, focusing on the intersection of anti-environmentalist discourse and Euroscepticism within these movements. Amidst growing tensions between agricultural practices and environmental policies, these protests highlight how civil society can pose a threat to the implementation of environmental policy across the European Union (EU). Utilizing discourse analysis and comparative methodology, the paper examines the platforms and public statements of the protesting groups to identify core themes of resistance against environmental regulations and EU agricultural policies. Furthermore, it incorporates a Euroscepticism lens to explore how anti-EU sentiments exacerbate the protests, reflecting broader issues of sovereignty, identity, and economic survival in the face of EU-wide policy directives. Our findings suggest that while environmental policy concerns are at the forefront, a significant undercurrent of Euroscepticism influences the discourse and demands of these protests, presenting a multifaceted challenge for EU policymakers. By analyzing these protests in a comparative context, this study contributes to the understanding of contemporary European social movements and the intricate balance between environmental sustainability and agricultural livelihoods within the EU policy framework.

Keywords: farmer protests, agriculture policy, Euroscepticism, anti-environmentalism

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Vlad Bujdei-Tebeica was born in 1989, in Bucharest. He studied political science at the National University of Political Science and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest, where he earned his PhD, published under the title „In populism’s Shadow: The European Left after the 2008 Crisis”. He currently works as an assistant professor at SNSPA. He also has experience working in the public administration sector and elaborating regional development strategies.