

European farmers gather in Brussels to put pressure on EU lawmakers

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Brussels, February 2 (RHC)-- In Belgium, farmers from across Europe have converged in the capital Brussels, calling on EU leaders to end free trade agreements that allow cheaper goods to dominate the market, and ease environmental regulations.

Hundreds of tractors have taken over Luxembourg Square, near the European Parliament. Farmers clashed with police, who hosed some of the protesters with water.

An Italian farmer, Enrico Parisi, told reporters: “First of all, we decided to come here to join with other kind of European young farmers to create a unique voice, not against, but with the cooperation of the European Parliament and the other kind of politicians, because we’d like to safeguard our tradition, our farmers’ moods, our quality of food, but to safeguard the majority part of this kind of situation, the dignified — a dignified income.”

The farmer protests, which started in France but soon spread across the EU, have disrupted traffic and led to confrontations with police in recent weeks amid rising tensions ahead of today’s EU summit.

Some far-right, nationalist leaders have seized on the movement to gain traction and foment anti-EU sentiment, including France’s Marine Le Pen and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who met with farmers in Brussels earlier on Thursday.

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