

## European Milk Board (EMB)

### Position paper on EU free trade agreements with third countries

*The European Commission is pursuing an offensive trade policy and export strategy. Europe's farmers are portrayed as those benefiting from free trade agreements (key words: diversified export possibilities, increased sales revenue).*

*However, the European Milk Board (EMB) is critical about the current free trade agenda – from the point of view of Europe's producers, especially dairy farmers, and consumers as well. The increased market opening will have drastic effects on the dairy sector.*

#### For a fair trade policy

Trade is just only when the profits and costs of international free trade agreements are fairly divided, and environmental and social factors are also considered. Trade cannot be an exercise in profit-making alone, but must be beneficial to all actors involved. In this context, we would like to point to the EU Alternative Trade Mandate (ATM), developed by over 50 civil society organisations, as a starting point for a public debate about a fundamental shift in the objectives and procedures of European trade policy.

#### Key principles for fair trade agreements:

- Adherence to the EU precautionary principle and no downward harmonisation of standards;
  - Maintaining consumer standards (food quality and sanitary aspects must be respected);
  - No lowering of environmental and animal welfare standards;
  - Maintaining social, labour and social security standards;
- Equal competition conditions for producers (see for example the issue in free trade agreement with New Zealand as well as association agreement with Ukraine);
- No policy to progressively open the EU market to third countries and no endangering of local farming;
- Securing national autonomy and jurisdiction (investor protection);

- Transparency, citizens' participation and democratic decision-making during negotiations;
- Protecting the food sovereignty of countries (trade policy and liberalisation should not become the cause of poverty and migration to third countries);
- Agricultural products must be excluded from free trade agreements;
- No industrialisation of agriculture in order to increase exports;
- Exports cannot act as a safety valve for European overproduction;
- Food commodity speculation must be prevented (a balanced market is an underlying condition for this to be possible).

### **The future of trade: Honest, safe and balanced!**

Fair trade agreements should bring well-being and economic growth to all partners involved. The EU must fundamentally and honestly keep these aspects in mind. It shoulders an important responsibility in ensuring that free trade agreements are not detrimental to stakeholders from within the EU nor to those from other countries.

We believe that sensitive sectors – like agriculture and especially the dairy sector – must be excluded from negotiations. These are strategically important sectors that determine the availability of healthy, safe food and thus the food sovereignty of the EU. Disadvantages and dangers to citizens and producers as well as the environment because of continuing down the path of predominant liberal trade policy through unfair international trade agreements are unacceptable. The agricultural sector cannot be sacrificed in this context in exchange for concessions regarding other sectors.

The EMB fully supports farmers and milk producers, who are the most vulnerable link in the food supply chain, and stands with society and consumers against a predominant liberal trade agenda.