

09.08.2017

Belgium criticises French project in the dairy sector



It is very understandable that some EU Member States search for their own ways of overcoming a deadlock if the EU lacks to put into place stabilising policy measures.

For instance, last year, France introduced an obligation for processors to label milk and dairy products so that consumers would know in which country the milk they buy has been produced and processed. Following this initiative, Belgian minister of Agriculture Willy Borsus complained, referring to the consequences of the measure for his country. According to the Belgian minister, trade with milk between Belgium and France has dropped by 17 percent since the introduction of the new labelling requirements and contracts for the sale of milk and milk products are now rarely renewed. His French homologue, Stéphane Travert, defended the labelling requirement as a measure increasing transparency for consumers and rejects his Belgian neighbour's criticism. According to Travert, the project has been running for a few months only and it is thus difficult to already have reliable data on its possible effects.

The conflict between the two countries clearly shows the importance of solving the problem in the dairy sector with stabilising policies *on EU level*. As a matter of fact, crises such as the ones the dairy sector has undergone repeatedly in the past years create negative tensions between EU Member States. Efficient crisis instruments on EU level would thus not only stabilise the milk market, but also play an important role in generally strengthening cohesion in the EU.

Silvia Däberitz, EMB director

[<<< back](#)