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Committee of the Regions: Suspending buying-in of milk powder risks triggering another crisis in the dairy sector

Following the Council's decision to suspend automatic buying-in of skimmed milk powder, the European Committee of the Regions warns of another potential crisis in the milk sector

(01.02.2018) Although overproduction of milk is forecast for this spring, Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES), president of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), believes that the decision by the Council of Ministers on 29 January to temporarily suspend automatic buying-in of skimmed milk powder, without any parallel measures to reduce production, risks triggering another crisis in the dairy sector.

Jacques Blanc (FR/EPP) , rapporteur for the CoR opinion on the price volatility of agricultural products, points out that since stocks of powdered milk are already very high and putting downward pressure on milk prices, the Council's decision would only make sense if the measure were complemented by a volume reduction programme: "If intervention is stopped without also reducing the quantity produced, there is a risk of flooding the milk market".

After his meeting with the European Milk Board, Ossi Martikainen (FI/ALDE), president of the CoR's Commission for Natural Resources, reiterated the position of the CoR, the EU's assembly representing local and regional authorities in the EU: "In a situation of budget cuts that obliges us to make better use of available resources we must regulate agricultural markets, not just to avert sectoral crises but also because this is much less costly than acting after the event, as the recurring crisis in the milk sector in recent years has illustrated".

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