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Press release: A new Commissioner for Agriculture must not change course

Even though Ciolos is stepping down as Commissioner for Agriculture at the end of the year, the new Commissioner must continue the policy of stabilising the milk market

(Brussels, 16 September 2014) As recently announced, the new European Commission, expected to take up office on 1 November 2014, will include a new Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. The nomination, for the Irishman Phil Hogan, still has to be confirmed by the European Parliament and the Council at the end of October. "We congratulate Phil Hogan on his nomination", says Sieta van Keimpema, Vice-President of the European Milk Board (EMB). "However, the change of commissioner must not mean a change in direction in agriculture", she adds.

What has been important for the outgoing Commissioner for Agriculture Dacian Ciolos is that the milk market must not be left to its own devices. This attitude has also been broadly supported by the Members of the European Parliament. Even though during Ciolos' term of office as Commissioner no effective provision was made for the period after the abolition of the milk quota in 2015, he and his team have been working in the right direction. Erwin Schöpges, a member of the EMB Board, adds: "Ciolos has tackled key issues like the Monitoring Agency for the milk market and seen them through. He also feels it is important to communicate with the organisations that really represent the producers." For, according to Schöpges, Ciolos deals not only with organisations whose names include the word "farmer" but actually represent only the interests of the dairies.

The policy of stabilising the milk market must be continued in the term of office of the new Commissioner for Agriculture. This is also enshrined in Article 39 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, which says: "The objectives of the common agricultural policy shall be: [...] to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture; to stabilise markets; to assure the availability of supplies (...)." EMB Vice-President Sieta van Keimpema regards it as self-evident that the new Commissioner must also see the work started through to the end, so that the instruments needed by the milk market are implemented at last: "Once again, events like the Russian ban on imports make it crystal clear to us that we must have the ways and means of being able to react properly to crises and specific market situations. The EMB is ready and willing to co-operate with the new Commissioner for Agriculture and the European Commission in the future."

Contacts:

EMB Vice-President – Sieta van Keimpema (DE, EN): +31 (0) 612 16 80 00

EMB board member Erwin Schöpges (DE, FR): +32 (0) 497 90 45 47

EMB press officer – Regina Reiterer (DE, EN, FR) +32 (0) 2808 1935

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