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Press release: Phil Hogan - Is his position as EU Commissioner still tenable?

EU policy ruining family dairy farms in Europe and in developing countries

(Berlin, 14.01.2016) Positions with heavy responsibility require responsible people to hold them. So the post of the EU Commissioner for Agriculture is a wrong choice at present. Nor is the German Minister of Agriculture exactly shining with proficiency in the milk policy. That is the gist of the European Milk Board (EMB) press conference during International Green Week in Berlin.

Although it has been obvious for months that the EU Commission's current course is boosting milk volumes in the market to the extreme and permanently putting downward pressure on prices, a damaging growth and export strategy is being maintained. The facts are being deliberately ignored or wrongly interpreted. The Vice-President of the EMB, Sieta van Keimpema, views the statements made by EU Commissioner Phil Hogan as highly problematical. *"Whereas all over Europe dairy farmers are struggling with prices often under 30 cents, Hogan says the milk market has stabilised[1] and is not in a crisis[2]",* the Dutchwoman says. Yet neither this affirmation of his nor his statement that prices were not at all below production costs[3] approximate anything like reality. *"If data are reinterpreted in such a way just to further justify his own policy, in my view that is mismanagement",* van Keimpema continues.

Although under Article 39 TFEU one of the main duties of the EU Common Agricultural Policy is to enable farmers to earn a decent living, agricultural income keeps on falling. A consequence of this trend is that the number of dairy farms in the EU has halved since 2007. That is no reason, though, for Phil Hogan to implement effective counter-measures.

"It is because of this attitude of refusal that his position as EU Commissioner is no longer tenable", is how Romuald Schaber, President of the EMB, draws the line under Phil Hogan's policy to date. But with his blockade mentality in the European Council, the German Minister of Agriculture Christian Schmidt was also to blame for the disastrous state of affairs in the milk market.

As Adama Diallo, leader of the National Union of Mini-Dairies and Local Milk Producers in Burkina Faso (UMPL/B) reports at the EMB press conference, the current EU policy is aiding the strategies of European dairies to establish themselves in the West African market. This is forcing out local milk production there; poverty is growing.

To approach the problems by tackling their causes, the European Milk Board has developed the **Market Responsibility Programme(MRP)**, an instrument that can stabilise the entire market situation in Europe on the basis of a voluntary restraint on supply and would help protect the fragile markets of developing nations against dumping exports from the EU. The EU Commission and European Council must now introduce this crisis instrument at last, to create decent living conditions in the long term for milk producers the world over.

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[1]<http://www.eu2015lu.eu/de/actualites/articles-actualite/2015/11/16-conseil-agri/index.html>

[2]<http://www.nfuonline.com/sectors/dairy/phil-hogan-says-dairy-sector-not-in-crisis/>

[3]http://www.vieuws.eu/food-agriculture/eu-farmers-resilient-despite-crisis-says-commissioner-hogan/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Newsletter+Thursday+AD+copy&utm_content=Newsletter+Thursday+AD+copy+CID_c924206747ebd5d8

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