

**Question for written answer E-009092/2015
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Fluctuating milk prices and ways to guarantee fair incomes for dairy farmers

Milk prices and some elements of farm income fluctuated wildly last year. As milk prices have slipped below EUR 300 per tonne, the prices paid to farmers have fallen well behind the costs of production. Farmers therefore face growing instability in their income sources and expenditure. They continue to lose money. The ending of production quotas accentuates the trends, because fair incomes are no longer guaranteed. This severely undermines the viability of smallholdings, while the costs of input materials rise incessantly.

Liberalisation of supply tends to strengthen large producers to the disadvantage of small ones. It concentrates production more and more, to the detriment of consumer choice, environmental rules and rural activity.

Does the Commission plan to develop price control mechanisms, to limit these fluctuations and set realistic price thresholds?

What mechanisms has it set up to protect smallholdings?