

**Question for written answer E-001139/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Milk stocks threatening prices

At the moment, 378 578 tonnes of milk powder are being stored in Europe. They are nothing short of a time bomb for the dairy sector. After milk quotas were ended in 2015, to remedy the plunge in prices caused by the Russian embargo, the Commission bought and stored hundreds of thousands of tonnes of powder in an effort to support the European market. Its intention was commendable, but that intervention policy of buying and storing a product as soon as its price falls costs the taxpayer and poses a threat to market stability. The Commission now has huge stocks which will soon become unfit for consumption and jeopardise any chance of the price of milk going back up. The Commission is no longer required to automatically buy milk powder at a set price but no decision has been taken regarding its existing stocks. It is worth stressing that selling those stocks in large quantities would inevitably destabilise a market which remains in a fragile situation.

1. What decision is the Commission considering proposing with regard to milk powder stocks?
2. Where appropriate, what does it plan to do with those stocks?
3. Is the Commission considering reintroducing quotas?