

**Question for written answer E-009572/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

**Patricia van der Kammen (NI)**

Subject: Bankruptcies among European egg producers due to European rules

According to a newspaper report<sup>1</sup>, the egg trade finds itself in a stranglehold due to the rules imposed by Brussels. Free trade agreements are being negotiated between the EU and the USA, India and the South American Mercosur which are liable to make matters worse.

EU law requires European farmers to comply with animal welfare standards in producing their eggs: for example, chicken batteries are deemed to be wrong. Accordingly, these farmers have in recent years made substantial investments in free-range barns. At the same time, the Commission welcomes with open arms imports of battery eggs from such countries as India, the USA, Ukraine and Argentina which do not comply with animal welfare standards.

In the answer to a previous question concerning the re-emergence of battery eggs in the EU (E-010734/2012)<sup>2</sup>, the Commission displayed no concern whatsoever about either farmers or the birds.

1. Is the Commission aware of the dramatic situation facing many European egg producers thanks to EU policy, as described inter alia by 'de Telegraaf'?
2. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it cannot be the intention that EU policy should destroy an industry in Europe, causing rising unemployment and economic losses?
3. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that its rules on animal welfare in the poultry industry are counterproductive and even hypocritical if at the same time it is permitted to import battery eggs from outside the European Union which do not meet animal welfare standards? Is the suffering of animals within the European Union different in nature, or worse, in comparison with such suffering elsewhere?
4. Does the Commission agree with the PVV that it would be better if the Commission stopped interfering in all kinds of fields and left it to the Member States to adopt legislation and policies? If so, when will this become apparent? If not, why not?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21812033/\\_Eierhandel\\_zit\\_klem\\_in\\_Brusselse\\_regels\\_.html](http://www.telegraaf.nl/mijnbedrijf/21812033/_Eierhandel_zit_klem_in_Brusselse_regels_.html).

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+WQ+E-2012-010734+0+DOC+XML+V0//NL&language=nl>,  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2012-010734&language=NL>.