

**Question for written answer E-014095/2013
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Soft landing in the dairy sector for all producers in EU

Global demand for dairy products is rising. The abolition of the European milk quota in 2015 thus represents an opportunity for ambitious and competitive dairy producers.

However, the milk quota ensures that the brakes will be kept on production until 2015. Moreover, producers have to pay a surplus levy, which is expected to potentially amount to over EUR 20 million in Ireland and over EUR 130 million in the Netherlands, which would be a record. Yet this will be taking place while the European quota will once again not be fully exploited, which indicates that there is scope for more production in Europe.

The European Commission has on numerous occasions said that it will be putting measures in place in order to guarantee a soft landing for all producers. So far, however, the Netherlands, Ireland and others are heading for a very hard landing.

1. Does the Commission believe that Irish and Dutch producers, too, are entitled to a soft landing that lives up to the promises previously given by the Commission?
2. Does the Commission believe that, given current forecasts, the Netherlands, Ireland and others are far from heading for a soft landing, and that there is an urgent need for supplementary measures in order to guarantee a soft landing for these producers too?
3. Does the Commission believe that the costs of the surplus levy (over EUR 130 million in the Netherlands and potentially over EUR 20 million in Ireland) could be better spent by producers on innovation and sustainable solutions rather than paying a fine for an antiquated and competition-inhibiting system such as the milk quota?
4. What measure or combination of measures is the Commission planning to put in place in the short term in order to resolve this problem before 2015? Is it considering fat correction, increasing the quota, European equalisation or lowering the surplus levy?