Question for oral answer O-000033/2015 to the Council
Rule 128
on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

Subject: End of milk quotas

31 March 2015 marked the end of milk quotas in the EU. The Commission removed all market and production regulation without considering the signs that portend a disaster in the short term. The ‘soft landing’ gave rise to a very serious crisis in the dairy sector in 2009, which required further action. As a result, in 2012 the ‘milk package’ was approved – a package which today is incapable of addressing the crisis in which the sector is immersed. In its report on the dairy market of 13 June 2014, the Commission itself expressed doubts about the EU regulatory framework’s capacity for addressing the extreme market volatility following the end of the quota system.

In November, the increase in production in the 2014/2015 season was 4.7 %, and the international market situation was complicated because countries such as the United States, Australia and New Zealand had increased their production by 2.4 %, 2.6 % and 4.1 % respectively. China’s demand contracted and exports to the Russian market are currently paralysed as a result of the veto. Drying towers for milk powder have proliferated. Farm gate prices are declining, with the percentages differing in each state, some exceeding 20 %. However, the Commission continues to state that the world market is growing and that European farmers can invest and increase their production. The model that follows this privatisation of dairy policy by the Commission will lead us to an EU where 15 000 farms with 1 000 cows will produce the same amount as currently but the negative impacts in terms of job losses, environmental damage and the impact in the southern countries will be much higher.

Has the Council planned to focus the debate only on instruments intended to address the crisis or does it want to open a real in-depth discussion aimed at launching real policies which seek to prevent a crisis in the European dairy sector? Is the Council willing to refocus the EU dairy policy on the supply of the European market, with market regulation measures which adjust supply to demand, or is it going to leave the sector totally vulnerable, dependent on the outside and subject to huge price volatility?

Is the Council going to implement policies for a production based on European pasture and fodder and undertake to propagate the right to produce in order to maintain and recover milk production in many areas already abandoned and affecting farmers in all countries?

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