Subject: Crisis in the European pig sector, and in the Belgian pig sector in particular

The Belgian pig sector is in deep crisis. Prices are at record lows and many pig meat producers are facing bankruptcy. The average producer has not made a profit since August 2020 and feed costs have risen to the highest levels since 2013. This dangerous combination of low prices and high production costs is weighing particularly heavily on the whole European pig sector. The low prices are due to several issues, including the aftermath of African swine fever, disrupted market access to China and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the pig meat chain. In the side-lines of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 11 and 12 October 2021, more than 20 Member States requested exceptional market measures for the sector. Unfortunately, the Commission rejected this request for an EU approach and proposed close monitoring of the European pig meat sector.

1. How will monitoring be carried out in practice, on the basis of which parameters and how frequent will reporting be?

2. Is the Commission prepared to look at the number of sows slaughtered so that it can quickly identify changes on the market?

3. As of what threshold or parameter will the Commission actually introduce exceptional market measures in order to avoid numerous bankruptcies and a subsequent social bloodbath in the sector and related sectors?