

**QUESTIONS OR REMARKS TO MRS FISCHER BOEL
AT THE CIBE/CEFS/EFFAT COLLOQUIUM OF 28TH JUNE 2005**

Jan KIRSCH (D), President of the Rhineland sugar beet growers' association and Chairman of the CIBE Common Market Countries Committee:

The COMMISSION's proposal has no ambition for European sugar beet growing and sugar industry.

There is absolutely no need to reduce production to 12 million tonnes.

We could produce 3 million tonnes more if there was a political will for this.

By prohibiting SWAP, the EU has the possibility of limiting imports. The EU also has the right to have a suitable export volume.

3 million tonnes, that is 350 000 hectares, that is 60 000 beet growers and 30 sugar factories.

It is worth taking good account of this instead of favouring Brazil.

By prohibiting SWAP, the EU can choose its own pricing policy.

If the COMMISSION does not remove SWAP, there will be no chance for a sustainable future for EU sugar beet and the sugar economy.

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Alain JEANROY (F), General Director of the French Sugar Beet Growers' Confederation (CGB):

Two chapters – Imports and Exports – have not been dealt with in this proposal.

We consider that imports cannot be managed by the price cut because of the exchange rate and therefore there must be controls, without which the quantitative management of the EU sugar market is not possible.

Furthermore, it is incomprehensible for the EU to accept - from one year to the next - a 72% reduction in sugar exports. Here again, this question of forthcoming sugar exports should be re-introduced into the future international Doha Round negotiations.

These two gaps – which must be filled – will mean the EU's rate of self-sufficiency in sugar will drop from 125% to 75%, which is unacceptable. Given the EU's available production capacity, it is easily possible to cover consumption needs in a competitive way.

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Jean-François SNEESSENS (B), General Director of the Belgian Sugar Beet Growers' Confederation (CBB):

In your speech, Commissioner, you have tried to reassure us about the risk of SWAP imports by indicating that the COMMISSION will keep a very close eye on these imports and their origin. Does that mean keeping a very close eye on these imports and the possibility of action in the event of the excessive development of SWAP itself, or simply with regard to fraud of origin?

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Carlo Alberto RONCARATI (I), President of the Italian Sugar Beet Growers' Association (ANB) and First Vice-President of CIBE:

Commissioner,

Allow me to develop some considerations of a political nature on the reform proposal you presented, to remind you that with the establishment of what was then the European Economic Community, Europe pursued the aim of peace, prosperity and social development.

Today we can say that this aim has been achieved, also through the Agricultural Policy – at present unfortunately greatly disputed – and that conditions of widespread welfare have been reached.

A prosperity that the EU proposes to share with other less fortunate countries, as a sign of solidarity which, since its origins, has constituted the true distinctive character of the Common policy.

Within the CMO, commitments in this direction have been assumed with conviction. Europe does not deny them, at times on the contrary, as with the introduction of the new CAP, it has even anticipated the times of its own reforms.

The recent opening to ten new countries has been a tangible demonstration of solidarity, as is the re-balancing policy carried out for them through the structural funds: there cannot and must not be a Europe at different speeds.

It is therefore astonishing and disconcerting that your own COMMISSION formulates a proposal that goes in the opposite direction.

A proposal that excludes some countries from the possibility of producing, that - with this – denies the principles of the Founder Fathers and that puts the EU into further crisis as has been seen by the considerable signs of disaffection shown by the failure of the Constitution through the referendums in France and the Netherlands.

Those signs must not be neglected: one must ask what went wrong?

According to widespread opinion, the trouble was - and still is - the ambiguity characterised by too many passages in the relation between the Member States and a common policy that has not yet been able to go beyond the strict agricultural sphere.

Among those ambiguities we can calmly insert the CMO Sugar reform proposal.

A proposal that damages European beet growers and sugar producers and, above all, which does not meet the needs of developing countries, the majority of whom would be excluded from our market, or of consumers, who would hardly benefit at all from a decrease in sugar price.

A proposal that compromises the very image of Europe!

We have always believed in a fair and united Europe, an authoritative protagonist on the political and economic world scene, as is appropriate to a geographical area that has been the cradle of civilisation.

What emerges from the COMMISSION's proposal is not the Europe we want! We still believe in the "European dream" and we will not give it up easily.

Therefore, we firmly intend to contest a proposal which creates the general impoverishment of the agricultural and industrial sectors; which puts in difficulty hundreds of thousands of families of entrepreneurs and workers and which – a very serious fact - damages the principles of solidarity.

Thank you for your attention.

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