



EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION  
ASSOCIATION LAITIÈRE EUROPÉENNE  
EUROPÄISCHER MILCHINDUSTRIEVERBAND

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## PRESS INFORMATION

### **European Dairy Association (EDA) underlines its position with regards to the WTO negotiations on Agriculture**

Brussels, 14 November 2005 – *Last Friday, 11 November 2005, a delegation of the European Dairy Association (EDA) met with EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel. At the occasion of this meeting, EDA defended its position with regards to the WTO negotiations on agriculture. EDA maintains its position regarding these upcoming negotiations.*

Because of its direct implications and potential major impacts for the whole industry, the European dairy sector follows the WTO negotiations on agriculture very closely. In order to explain clearly its position, the EDA invited EU Agriculture Commissioner Mariann Fischer Boel for a constructive meeting last Friday. Any WTO agreement is of major importance for the EU dairy industry. EDA states that it is pleased with the outcome of the meeting and that its arguments and challenges seem to be well understood by Commissioner Fischer Boel.

Above all, the EDA underlines that any WTO agreement should give the dairy industry the opportunity to successfully undertake any further structural developments required by the changing world trade environment, this from a timing (gradual phasing) and from a schedules perspective (respond to changes in the international trade pattern). This translates in these following points:

- The EDA supports the pursuit of multilateral trade liberalisation through the WTO, the dairy industry is well developed and considers that any WTO agreement can be at the basis of an increase in trade opportunities;
- Any phasing out of export support schemes and decrease in import tariffs should take place gradually over the full implementation period, with increasing speed towards the end; front loading is not acceptable.
- With regards to the export support, to have the possibility for the industry to adapt during the phasing out period, for EDA any further reductions in supported volume are not acceptable: phasing out has to take place only through budget reductions;
- With regards to market access, the present proposal of the EU is the limit; any further reduction in import tariffs will result in a significant decrease of the milk price, that will go far beyond the agreements as set out in the CAP-reform, the basis for the EU mandate;
- EDA and the dairy industry advocate a comparable and well-balanced approach with other developed countries as the US, Australia and New Zealand regarding all three pillars (export support, market access, domestic support)

Commenting the upcoming WTO negotiations and their potential impact on the European dairy industry, Mr Veijo Meriläinen, President of EDA, says “that the EDA is aware of the potential increase in trade opportunities the WTO negotiations represent for the dairy industry; but that however any WTO agreement will have to be well-balanced with a reasonable timeline for the European dairy industry to adapt itself to any new situation, and with sufficient flexible schedules to allow the EU dairy industry to adapt its product mix to respond to changes in the international trade pattern. Our aim as an organisation is to make sure that the European dairy sector – farmers and processors – remains prosperous now and in the future” concludes Mr Meriläinen.

*About the European Dairy Association*

*The European Dairy Association represents the interests of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of the EDA consists of the national trade associations for dairy processors in each EU Member State.*

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