



connect to the world of dairy

President

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**President of the EU Commission**  
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**European Council 13 & 14 December 2018**  
**Follow up of the March 2018 European Council Conclusions: SINGLE MARKET**

Dear President,

**The EU Single Market is essential for the European Dairy Industry**

The European dairy industry is the economic backbone of rural Europe and beyond: 12,000 processing sites across Europe, more than 300,000 direct jobs in the milk processing industry, we are partnering with about 700,000 well trained and committed dairy farmers on a daily basis; our industry is characterized by small and medium sized companies (SMEs) and at the same time: Europe is home of five out of the global top ten dairies.

And the EU dairy sector is the guardian of a unique culinary heritage and a cultural treasure: more than 300 cheeses and other dairy products are protected as Geographical Indications – quality cheese is linked in the consumer perception around the world to Europe.

All over Europe, we have the tradition of the past, the skills of today and the passion for the future of milk production and processing.

We claim the economic and social importance of our industry, but we know that our industry needs the right framework to succeed.

The greatest benefit for our dairy industry today comes from

- a well-functioning EU single market for our high-quality products,
- an ambitious EU trade agenda and
- the Common Agricultural Policy

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## Let's focus on the EU Single Market

„The free movement of safe and wholesome food is an essential aspect of the internal market and contributes significantly to the health and the well-being of citizens and to their social and economic interests,” as Whereas 1 of the General Food Law (Regulation 178/2004) puts it.

Today, in a time where we should also celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of our EU Single Market, this Single Market is no longer functioning the way it should for milk and dairy and for food in general.

The EU Single Market provides all EU dairy processors with a strong home market of still 500 mio citizens in which to operate.

Next to the Brexit decision, the biggest overthrow of the European project, we have seen huge failures in the Single Markets over the last two years:

### Origin labelling

The EU dairy sector has always been firmly supporting the European legislation on voluntary origin labelling.

We deeply regret that our industry is now faced with numerous national mandatory origin labelling laws forcing especially dairies in so-called border regions to revise their milk collection strategy.

We have one EU milk quality defined by the harmonised EU food law. National origin labelling decrees have therefore no legal or technological justification and we all know that they are powered by purely political motivations.

**As dairy industry, we have counted in vain on the EU Commission, the guardian of the treaty, to react firmly and oppose to these national proposals.**

Unfortunately, our concerns have not been heard. What we can see now is a wave of national laws destroying the EU Single Market for milk and dairy, starting with France and Italy, and followed by Lithuania, Greece, Finland, Romania, Portugal and Spain.

We urge the EU Commission to use its powers to stop this spread of nationalism and defend the EU Single Market for milk and dairy.

### Nutrition labelling

Nutrition labelling is another field where various initiatives have been undertaken at national level, the most famous example being the Traffic-Lights style labelling promoted by the UK. These many different traffic light style nutrition labelling schemes have a major negative impact on the free movement of milk and dairy products.



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We have been following with most interest the infringement procedure launched by the EU Commission for very good reasons against the UK labelling initiative. It would be most appreciated if the Commission could inform the stakeholders at which stage this process stands now.

**As dairy industry we see no logic or consumer benefit in a nutrition labelling scheme where a diet soda drink ranks better than drinking milk.**

### Intra-trade Certificates

The milk picture across Europe has evolved so much that companies have developed a presence across multiple countries and the raw milk is sourced across borders. This is valid for EU SMEs as well as of course, for larger companies. At the same time, the EU milk production has constantly increased in the last five years. As such, companies have invested in processing capacities in several EU members states and larger quantities of milk are placed on the international market. This implies transport of milk raw materials and finished dairy products across borders.

However, the further export to EU or third countries is complicated by a lack of certified information (pre-certification) on the original products relating to the health of the animals or other certification requirements as logically veterinary health certificates are not issued for products traded between EU member states. It is important that the requirement for providing background information in-between EU Member States is not a request of the 3rd country, but it is a request from the authorities in the EU country of export to fulfil the bilaterally agreed criteria in the final Health Certificate. With this system, the dairy sector and other sectors like the meat industry face within the EU internal market technical barriers to trade. We wish to have a pragmatic solution for both the trade of raw material and finish products. The solution requires a close cooperation between EU Commission services and the competent Member States' authorities and we have seen some progress in the discussions in the so-called Potsdam Group.

Dear President,

We trust that you will appreciate our firm commitment to the Union and to its core principles and we would be delighted if your agenda would allow a meeting with the voice of the EU dairies to underline our pro-Europe approach and to exchange on the fundamentals of our success: the European project.

Vive l'Europe et vive le lait

Michel Nalet