



Last Council of the Spanish Presidency Espinosa highlights existing distortions in milk pricing

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Spain's minister for Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, Elena Espinosa. EFE

This Tuesday, the Spanish Minister for Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, Elena Espinosa, chairs the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Luxembourg, the last of the Spanish Presidency, which addresses pricing distortions, the dairy market situation as well as discussing matters related to fishing quotas.

Entering the Council of Ministers of Agriculture, Espinosa said that in the milk production chain "some links are earning too much. We continue seeing serious distortions; if prices paid to producers go down that does not affect the consumer and vice versa, if the farmer's prices rise, so do the consumer's."

In this respect, she stated that "in the middle there is some link in the chain" which does not accurately reflect price changes.

The ministers will discuss the conclusions of the High Level Group on the dairy sector - comprising experts from the EU-27 - including those that requested contract normalisation, to improve farmers' power to negotiate with the industry.

Elena Espinosa stressed that within the EU prices are "fairly low," although in Spain they are above average, with "great differences between autonomous communities" and a small, but very mild, upward trend.

In the area of fisheries, Spain upholds in the Council that fishing quotas be adapted to scientific reports, said Espinosa.

EU Fisheries ministers will analyse Brussels' preliminary guidelines on catches for the coming year and will also discuss the fisheries reform.

"As EU President and as (the position of) Spain, we hold that the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) comply with scientific reports, without which responsible and sustainable fishing will be impossible to attain," said Espinosa.

Evaluation of the Spanish Presidency

With regard to evaluating the Spanish Presidency in this area, Espinosa said that if we look at the EU's 2020 Strategy, a document adopted at the last European Council and which will govern Europe until 2020, we find that the agricultural sector appears as "a strategic sector, biodiversity appears as a clear commitment for which Europe must fight and also the whole issue of climate change."

"All the issues under my competence have had a clear reflection on the future of Europe and in that future we all want to overcome the crisis as quickly as possible," added the Spanish minister.