



MINISTER
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, NATURE AND FOOD QUALITY

Mr Phil Hogan
Member of the European Commission

The Hague, 25 APR. 2019
19102123

Dear Mr Hogan, *dear Phil,*

In the margins of the Agriculture Council on Monday 15 April we briefly discussed the outcome of the negotiations with Ukraine, amending the trade preferences for poultry meat and poultry meat preparations as provided for by the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine. I appreciate the Commission's efforts to close the apparent 'loophole' in relation to the specific tariff line (CN 0207 13 70) as soon as possible. As you know, I have serious concerns regarding the outcome of the negotiations with Ukraine in relation to the increased TRQ for poultry meat.

I deeply regret the quota of 50.000 tons, needed to repair the unintended use of the abovementioned tariff line. Moreover, it is necessary to send a strong signal on animal welfare and SPS standards, areas where Ukraine needs to do more. I find it very hard to accept this outcome. As you know, I am currently advocating an important transition in agriculture towards a more sustainable and circular system based on responsible use of natural resources, safeguarding biodiversity and animal welfare. In addition, the poultry sector in the EU - and particularly in the Netherlands - is facing a challenging time with the increased import from Ukraine, as well as from Brazil and the uncertainty created by the Brexit process. In this light, both the current problem with the unintended use of the so called residual quota and the solution found in the talks with Ukraine are very difficult to explain to the EU and Dutch poultry sector and to the public at large.

It is of the utmost importance that Ukraine accelerates its implementation of the EU SPS principles and EU animal welfare standards - in particular for broilers and laying hens - to which it is bound under the Association Agreement and WTO rules. Progress in these areas is clearly still lacking although it is essential for creating a level playing field.



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In view of the above, I would urge the Commission to find a satisfying solution, including a strong statement reminding Ukraine of its commitment to implement all the conditions of the Agreement, including the implementation of the mentioned standards. I also urge the Commission to put pressure on Ukraine to speed up implementation of these standards and to increase its efforts in monitoring concrete progress on the ground in this regard.

Dear Phil, I very much appreciated your comments sharing our concerns. I sincerely hope that we can work together in order to achieve an outcome that ends this unanticipated and regrettable situation, while sending the right signals to the sector, to Ukraine and to the outside world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Carola Schouten