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ENVI COMMITTEE VOTES TO SHUT DOWN EU PHOSPHATE FERTILIZER INDUSTRY

Unrealistic Cd limits may sound the death knell for embattled key EU industry

The Alliance Européenne des Engrais Phosphatés (AEEP), a Brussels-based association representing the EU phosphate and NPK industry, has expressed its dismay with the radical result of vote in the European Parliament's ENVI Committee. The Committee has just adopted its amendments to the European Commission's proposal on the New EU Fertilizer Regulation.

While some adopted amendments improved the proposal, the AEEP is extremely concerned by the results of the vote for unrealistic cadmium limits and other obligations and restrictions related to cadmium. By setting unattainable goals, the ENVI Committee effectively voted for the destruction of the European phosphate fertilizers industry and in favor of dependence on Russia. EU already suffers from high level of import dependence.

Although the ENVI Rapporteur Ms. Elisabetta Gardini (EPP, Italy) proposed a reasonable compromise of 60 mg as the cadmium limit in fertilizers, trying to accommodate environmental as well as industrial, technological and geopolitical concerns, a small majority of Socialist, ALDE and Green MEPs pushed for radical limits without any consideration to their real impact and effectiveness. Not only will these limits lead to the disappearance of an entire EU industry, but they will drastically increase EU dependency towards Russia for a critical material needed for EU food security, and will severely impair the already fragile economies of North African countries reliant on phosphate rock exports.

Most devastating, however, was a total disregard by the ENVI Committee for scientific data when imposing the unjustified limits. ***"It is now clear that science and facts are no longer the basis for adopting EU policies in the ENVI Committee"*** said Tomasz Włostowski, the Acting General Director of AEEP.

As the position of the ENVI Committee has been adopted by a relatively small majority, AEEP urges the European Parliament to overturn it during its Plenary Session in the fall. **A limit of 80 mg will secure the achievement of all related objectives of the European Union**, including health and environmental (need to reduce cadmium in soils), geopolitical (avoiding dependence on Russia, preventing a negative impact on North African developing countries and ensuring EU food security), industrial (securing EU fertilizer production), and agricultural (retaining low prices of phosphate fertilizers to secure EU farmers' competitiveness). Any lower limit, in particular those adopted by the ENVI Committee, will result in structural weakening of the European Union.

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