

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Brussel, 27 februari 2014

Aan: de leden van de Commissie Europese Zaken van de Tweede Kamer

Geachte Leden, graag breng u op de hoogte van de brief die ik naar Eurocommissaris Hahn heb gestuurd inzake Europese steun voor Zeeland vanwege het faillissement van Thermphos, zie bijlage.

Met vriendelijke groet,


Lambert van Nistelrooij, lid van het Europees Parlement

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MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Strasbourg, February 25, 2014

Honorable Mr. Hahn,

We, members of the European Parliament, would like to introduce the following case to you. Thermphos, the sole producer of white phosphorus in the Union located in Vlissingen in the province of Zeeland had suffered from the persistent unequal competition of a Kazakh company. Consequently, Thermphos filed an anti-dumping complaint to the European Commission that was found legitimate. Nonetheless, the Commission decided not to take anti-dumping measures against the company from Kazakhstan. This decision implied that the production of white phosphorus in the Union would cease to exist. For Thermphos, the dumping practice and the decision not to take measures resulted directly in the bankruptcy of the company.

We therefore request you, the Commissioner, to explore the possibilities for the Union to show solidarity with Zeeland through the European Solidarity Fund. The outcome of this investigation is not only relevant for this particular case, but also for the future reform of the European Solidarity Fund.

For the province of Zeeland, for the Netherlands and for the Union as a whole, the bankruptcy of Thermphos has grave consequences. In the first place, the Union has lost its sole producer of phosphorus. The amount of phosphorus produced in Vlissingen equaled the amount produced in the entire United States of America. Now that Thermphos has ceased to exist, the Union is dependent on other (instable) countries for the manufacturing of phosphorus. Furthermore, the company was in the middle of "greening" their production process and was striving to fulfill the obligations set out in the Resource Efficient Europe strategy. By 2020 100% of their production would consist of recycled phosphorus. Thus, the company was not only unique but also a great example for sustainability of industries throughout the Union. In addition, since the production process generated low-nuclear waste, the costs of cleaning the polluted area will be high, namely between 90 and 150 million euros. A bill which will affect the Dutch province of Zeeland's ability to co-finance European projects enormously.

At this point in time, it is not constructive to point fingers or play the blame game. As is often the case with decision-making of 27 member states, different geo-political interests clashed. However, the sacking of Thermphos not only resulted in the loss of over 500 jobs, it wiped out 1,07% of the economy of Zeeland and 4% of their industrial economy at the same time. Due to stringent rules and the exceptional character of the case it is hard to access funds to mitigate the consequences. In this case and in other cases in the future we believe that the Union should be able to show solidarity without being hampered by bureaucratic rules. Therefore we request an investigation to the possibilities to access the European Solidarity Fund in order for the Union to show solidarity with this

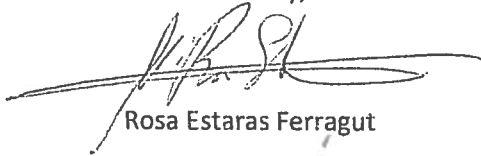
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particular case. Moreover, the outcomes of this investigation should be taken into account when discussing the reforms of the European Solidarity Fund and the contribution to the Thermphos case.

Yours sincerely;



Rosa Estaras Ferragut

Rapporteur for the European Union Solidarity Fund



Lambert van Nistelrooij

Rapporteur for the ESIF funds