

International Confederation of European Beet Growers

CONFEDERATION INTERNATIONALE
DES BETTERAVIERS EUROPEENS
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CONFEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE
DEI BIETICOLTORI EUROPEI



INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG
EUROPÄISCHER RÜBENANBAUER
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European sugar beet growers united to face difficult times

European Beet Growers held their 44th Congress in Berlin from 3rd to 5th June. They examined the situation of the world sugar economy and the main economic and political issues currently facing beet growing in Europe, with a special focus on the abolition of the EU quota system as from 1st October 2017. High level speakers, including the German Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture Christian Schmidt, members of the European Parliament and representatives of the European Commission, participated in this event which gathered around 280 delegates and guests.

“Beet sugar yields are continuously improving. Beet growing in the EU respects the principles of sustainability at economic, social and environmental levels, as highlighted by the EU Beet Sugar Sustainability Partnership presented during the Congress. However, European Beet Growers have good reasons to be very concerned. EU average sugar price dropped by 44% between January 2013 and January 2015, while world markets prices recently reached a six-year low. The EU Institutions lack ambition in the development of bioethanol. The CAP reform leads to a more complex frame for farmers. While third competitors are actively regulating and supporting their sugar and ethanol policy, the EU sugar and isoglucose quota system will disappear as from 1st October 2017” emphasised CIBE President Bernhard Conzen.

Discussions focused on the post-2017 outlook as well as on the management of transparency and future volatility on the EU sugar market. European Beet growers consider that beet prices should not only cover beet production costs but also ensure long-term remunerative income as well as include a fair sharing of added value between growers and processors. In addition, CIBE President Bernhard Conzen stressed that *“the contractual framework and a close dialogue between growers and manufacturers are absolutely necessary to ensure stable supply on the EU market; moreover we will also need appropriate regulatory tools to ensure transparency on the market and appropriate information for sugar beet growers”*. These tools, to be monitored by the EU Commission, should be a detailed price reporting scheme based on prices collected from undertakings as well as a sugar, isoglucose and ethanol balance sheet based on statistics collected from undertakings. *“The objective of EU legislators to strengthen the role of farmers along the supply chain should materialize and we urge the European Institutions to support beet growers to face the challenges ahead”*.

European beet growers warned the EU Institutions that the European beet sugar sector has entered a period of turbulence and asked them to remain particularly vigilant so as to take necessary and timely measures to mitigate the consequences of an unbalanced market and of further restructuring in the future.

The full CIBE Congress resolutions adopted by its Board of Directors and presented by the CIBE President in his closing speech of the Congress are available on www.cibe-europe.eu