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**MODTAGET
LEDELSESSEKRETARIATET**

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Brussels, 11 October 2011

Mr Mogens LYKKETOFT
President
FOLKETINGET
Christiansborg

DK - 1240 KØBENHAVN
DENMARK

Mr President,
Dear Colleague,

As you know, during their meeting of September 20th, 2011, the Council of ministers in charge of Agriculture held a policy debate on a proposal for a regulation concerning the distribution of food products to the most deprived persons in the Union.

A qualified majority in favour of guaranteeing the effective functioning of the programme until the end of 2013 could not be reached as a blocking minority of six Member States emerged against the proposal.

The Presidency took note of the positions of the delegations and undertook to reflect on how to take the work forward on this file.

The current programme under which the European Union can supply food from intervention stocks to the most deprived persons was created in 1987. It was incorporated into the "single common market organization" regulation in 2007. With a budget of € 500 million, this programme represents only a yearly cost of €1 for each European citizen.

I would like to draw your attention on the consequences of the present situation for the most deprived especially in the light of the current economic crisis as the gap between the richer and the poorest keeps deepening. The number of European citizens requiring food assistance is increasing.

Thanks to this programme, 400 000 tons of food products are distributed each year to more than 18 million people in Europe. In Belgium for instance, it represents 50% of all distribution of food products to the most deprived by food banks and charity organizations.

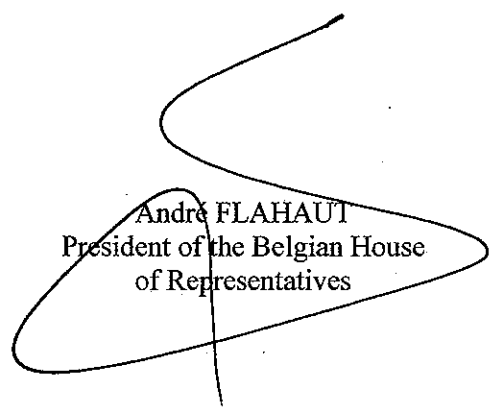
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Numerous representatives of the European civil society have expressed their worries for the future of the programme and have unanimously called on the institutions of the European Union to find a solution. I am convinced that national parliaments can also play a major role to secure the continuation of this programme.

It should be stressed that, on October 3rd, the Commission presented a new proposal for the continuation of the programme in 2012 and 2013 (COM – 2011 – 634). This proposal is a compromise in order to reach an agreement amongst all the Member States.

I would appreciate if you could take the necessary steps in order to draw the attention of the members of your assembly on this crucial issue. Let us not forget that Europe is above all a matter of solidarity.

Yours sincerely,



André FLAHAUT
President of the Belgian House
of Representatives