

Brussels, 13 February 2024

STATEMENT ON THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL TO RENEW THE ATM REGULATION FOR UKRAINE – EXTRA IMPORTS MUST BE RESTRICTED BEFORE NEXT JUNE 2024

On 31 January 2024, the European Commission proposed to renew temporary trade-liberalisation measures applicable to Ukrainian products for one additional year from 6 June 2024 to 5 June 2025. It reaffirmed its trade support for Ukraine and expressed the importance to provide “stronger safeguards to prevent market disruptions in the UE” for the most sensitive products, including sugar. CIBE has taken note of the new automatic safeguards proposed. Such safeguards, however, will only apply as from 6 June 2024 and CIBE regrets that nothing is proposed to help protect EU farmers and primary processors from adverse impacts of sugar imports from Ukraine which are putting pressure on the sector and its market during this campaign.

With regards to the proposed safeguards mechanism as from 6 June 2024, the question now for European farmers is whether what is proposed will be effective and will provide the stability and the relief needed on the ground. CIBE together with COPA-COGECA and a coalition of EU associations have presented their suggestions in a joint letter dated 9 February 2024 to further improve this proposal and to make it effective: cereals and oilseeds should be included in the automatic safeguards, the reference period should be the years 2021-2022, the deadline to trigger the automatic safeguards should not exceed 10 days and a system ensuring the destination of Ukrainian imports should be introduced.

CIBE urges the Council and the European Parliament to provide the right signal and amend the Commission proposal accordingly.

Concerning the situation until 5 June 2024, nothing is proposed to tackle the urgent issue of 2024 imports which are already strongly impacting the EU sugar market and price. As the automatic safeguard will be effective as from 6 June 2024, and given that in Ukraine sugar to be sold in 2024 has already been fully produced (between September 2023 and January 2024 2023), there is a strong incentive for Ukrainian producers, who have significantly increased their production to benefit from this trade liberalisation, to export as much of their sugar as possible into the EU during the first months of 2024, for which no “emergency brake” is foreseen. According to information dated 8 February 2024 by National Association of Sugar Producers of Ukraine, the 2023/24 Ukraine sugar export volume is 0.9 Mt., i.e. 4 times more their average exports before the war and 45 times more the sugar import TRQ under the Association Agreement.

Therefore, given these circumstances, CIBE calls on the Member States and the European Commission to rapidly find solutions, such as the activation of the current safeguard clause (Article 4 points 1 and 6 of current Ukraine ATMs Regulation (EU) 2023/1077) and to act accordingly.

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