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## **Missed opportunity by the European Parliament to fully address the issue of deforestation**

Today, 13 September 2022, the European Parliament adopted its report on a proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on making available on the Union market as well as export from the Union of certain commodities and products associated with deforestation and forest degradation.

While the text adopted by the European Parliament goes in the right direction in the respect of the EU Green Deal ambitions and consistency with the EU trade policy, CIBE, the International Confederation of European Beet growers, and CEFS, the European Sugar Manufacturers Association, regret the absence of cane sugar in the European Parliament proposed list of products concerned by this new upcoming regulation. However, CIBE and CEFS note positively that cane sugar is mentioned by the European Parliament as a product that should specifically be included in the first review of this Regulation.

Cane sugar is among the ten most traded agricultural commodity worldwide and sugarcane a tropical crop, for which land demand is competing with tropical forests and ecosystems in some countries. Elisabeth Lacoste and Marie-Christine Ribera, Director and Director General of CIBE and CEFS respectively, pointed out that *"it is regrettable that the European parliament did not consider including cane sugar in the first place in such an iconic regulation as regards the reciprocity in standards of production between European operators and third countries. This does not send a clear signal particularly ahead of revitalizing the EU-Mercosur relations."*

According to WWF, cane sugar is one of the top ten agricultural products associated with imported deforestation. About 25-30% of all EU sugar imports came from Brazil, and over half of EU sugar imports come from Latin America. Brazil, the leading sugar cane producer, registered the highest deforestation and primary forest degradation (including fires) rate worldwide in recent years. In the light of a stronger EU-Latin America commercial integration, the lack of addressing the sugarcane-driven deforestation could cause the loss of valuable biomes and could contribute to overstepping the tipping point for the Amazon and Cerrado, with irreversible environmental consequences.

Therefore, not including cane sugar in the list of the regulation is a missed opportunity for the European Parliament to fully address the problem of deforestation and forest degradation. The commitment for the inclusion of cane sugar in first revision of the regulation may be too late to address this acute problem.

CIBE, jointly with CEFS, restate the importance of including cane sugar in the list of commodities concerned by the regulation by now and call on the Member States to act now and not to postpone concrete measures tackling this issue.