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STATEMENT

Brexit: a no deal must be avoided

Ahead of the vote of the UK House of Commons to take place on 15th January, the EU agri-food chain would like to point to the dramatic economic consequences of a no-deal Brexit for EU and UK farmers, food and drink producers, traders in agri-food commodities as well as consumers.

In 2017, EU27 agri-food exports to the UK amounted to €41 billion euros while the UK exports to the EU reached €17 billion euros – this trade, and the businesses behind it employ 44 million people across the EU28, reflecting the degree of integration and complexity of the food supply chain.

The exit of the UK from the EU without a deal will inevitably lead to significant trade disruption and a lose-lose situation for the entire agri-food chain. Burdensome and unavoidable procedures, such as official controls of goods, sanitary and phytosanitary inspections, veterinary certificates and import tariffs will lead to increased delays for checks at borders and raise the costs for both sides.

Agri-food operators across the EU27, and in the UK, as well as the relevant competent authorities will need sufficient time to adapt to the new conditions that Brexit poses. A transition period is therefore vital for operators and authorities alike to suitably prepare and adjust. It is important that during this period, the UK would continue to abide by existing EU regulations governing food production and to honour its existing commitments.

The European agri-food chain would like to reiterate that a no-deal Brexit would be hugely damaging for both the UK and EU agri-food sector and must be avoided at all costs.

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