

## **No deal would compound Covid-19 impact**

*(Brussels, 24 September 2020)* The prospect of negotiators failing to reach a deal on future EU-UK trade relations will result in a devastating double whammy for farmers, agri-food businesses and traders who are already struggling to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ahead of the 9<sup>th</sup> round of negotiations taking place next week, with time almost out, we call on negotiators to find the necessary resolve to do everything in their power to agree to a future trade agreement that supports business and jobs – and helps protect EU – UK trade that was worth €58 billion in 2019. The agreement must seek to maintain a level playing field between the EU and the UK, as well as protect the integrity of the single market.

For the last two years, European food business operators, Member States and others have been preparing to absorb the shock of the UK departing from the EU. But where business needs predictability, all we have is uncertainty, with no clarity as to how exports will be treated from 1 January 2021.

Less than four months before the end of the transition period, there are still many unknowns that make preparation impossible. In particular, food operators from both sides of the Channel need to know the UK's regulatory regime on plant health, animal health, food and feed controls, and any future requirements impacting EU exports.

The EU agri-food chain expects that regulatory elements will be shared urgently and hopes that UK and EU negotiators will achieve a high-quality outcome for a free trade agreement within the very limited time left. Given the impending difficulties, we also ask that the €5 billion Brexit Adjustment Reserve<sup>1</sup> be made available swiftly for the agri-food sector, which is one of the sectors worst-hit by the effects of Brexit.

Trade and businesses flourish where there are predictability and trust. We therefore call for the continued and full implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement and a swift conclusion of the current trade negotiations.

ENDS

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<sup>1</sup> Included in the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework and agreed on by the European Council on 21 July 2020

**About us:**

[Copa and Cogeca](#) are the united voice of farmers and agri-cooperatives in the EU. Together, they ensure that EU agriculture is sustainable, innovative and competitive, guaranteeing food security to half a billion people throughout Europe. Copa represents over 23 million farmers and their families whilst Cogeca represents the interests of 22,000 agricultural cooperatives. They are one of the biggest and most active lobbying organisations in Brussels.

[CELCAA](#) is the EU umbrella association representing the trade in agri-food and commodities to the EU Institutions and stakeholders, representing more than 35,000 trading companies. We cover the trade in cereals, grains, oil, sugar, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, tobacco, spices and nuts, cut flowers and plants and general produces.

[FoodDrinkEurope](#) represents the food manufacturing industry. Made up of 294,000 businesses and 4.7 million workers, the food and drink industry buys 70% of all EU agricultural produce and is Europe's largest manufacturing industry.