

Five urgent requests on EU-UK trade relations

As the EU and UK trade negotiations seem to be reaching a conclusion, Europe's farmers and agri-cooperatives, food manufacturers, traders, and agri-food sector workers have issued the following joint statement outlining what will need to be done next:

Our priority is to safeguard jobs and allow the agri-food sector to thrive. At this eleventh hour we call on negotiators to strike a comprehensive tariff-free and quota-free trade agreement with close harmonisation of rules, including on sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade. We must strive for a level playing field, including on workers' rights.

Whether a deal is struck or not, we have 5 urgent requests:

1. On conclusion of the negotiations, we will need immediate clarity on future UK-EU trade rules to avoid more economic turmoil and job uncertainty for a sector already badly bruised by the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. The UK will leave the Single Market and the Customs Union, which will entail customs procedures, regulatory burdens and rising transport costs. A no-deal scenario, with the imposition of tariffs and heavy customs requirements, will create a dire situation. Given agri-food businesses will likely feel a greater impact from Brexit than other sectors, specific measures will be needed for a smooth transition, as well as broad support from the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve.
3. Public authorities will need to organise quick and effective information campaigns to help businesses understand the new rules and plan their operations.
4. Workers' rights must be protected, and businesses given the assistance they need to maintain job security for the millions of employees working in the European agri-food chain.
5. Constant dialogue with the European Commission and UK authorities, as well as with social partners and stakeholders, will be essential to respond to potential disruptions and emergencies that will emerge after 31 December 2020.

Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, we encourage the EU and UK to put any acrimony behind them in favour of a strong and productive relationship for the benefit of all.

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About us:

[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.

[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 have 66 member organisations from the EU member states. Together, 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. CELCAA covers the trade in cereals, grains, oil, sugar, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, egg and egg products, tobacco, spices and nuts, cut flowers and plants and general produces.

[EFFAT](#) is the European federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions. As a European Trade Union Federation with 2.6 million members, representing 120 national trade unions from 35 European countries, EFFAT defends the interests of more than 22 million workers employed long the food chain. EFFAT is a member of the ETUC and the European regional organisation of the IUF.