

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 7th December 2020

BREXIT: GET THE DEAL ACROSS THE LINE - called Marcel van der Vliet, CELCAA President

Presenting the views of the European Trade in agri-food and commodities at the Hearing of COMAGRI on "EU agriculture after Brexit" held on 7th December 2020, Marcel van der Vliet, CELCAA President, urged the negotiators to agree on a trade deal that would keep the trade in agri-food flows. Trade facilitation measures are crucial to avoid chaos at borders on 31st December 2020 and onwards. CELCAA also asked the support of Members of European Parliament at COMAGRI to the plea of the agri-food sector to benefit from the EU Brexit crisis fund.

The European Parliament Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development (COMAGRI) held a public Hearing on 7th December 2020 in the afternoon on "EU agriculture after Brexit". Presenting the view of the EU agri-food trade, Marcel van der Vliet, CELCAA president, regretted that three weeks before the end of the withdrawal agreement, traders, operators and food businesses still lack clarity on the new regime on 1st January 2021.

The withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union will have a massive impact, deal or no deal. *'Traders hope that negotiators can agree on an ambitious trade agreement that would avoid tariff and quotas imposed on agri-food products. Trading partners can talk at length about the terms and conditions of a deal, but remember: never forget to close the business, get the deal across the line'. "The United Kingdom is the first export market of EU agri-food products, and by far. It will be chaos on 31st December 2020 and onwards if there is no agreement on trade facilitation measures',* Marcel added.

73% of the United Kingdom's imports of agri-food & commodities come from the EU27, representing 58 b€ in 2019. In case of no deal, trade flows will be displaced or even ceased, especially in the dairy, meat or wine sector. MFN Import duties are prohibitive for many agri-food lines, and the United Kingdom will replace sources of supply with other third countries. In case of a deal, customs processes will still add red tape and costs, impacting trade. The CELCAA president stressed the need for trade facilitation measures such as Green lines for perishable agricultural products and acceptance of e-certificates. Deal or no deal, the EU agri-food sector will be deeply impacted and will lose market share and competitiveness in the UK market.

"The United Kingdom is our first export market. Considering the contraction of global trade and closure of the food services due to the global pandemic Covid-19, it will take some times for the EU operators to find alternative export destinations or new outlets" added Marcel van der Vliet. Considering the impact of Brexit on the EU agri-food sector, CELCAA President asked the Members of the European Parliament to echo the concerns of the EU agri-food sector in view to benefit from the EU Brexit crisis fund.

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