



The future strategy of the European Commission must strengthen the "TO" in "Farm To Fork." The transition to more sustainable agri-food trade needs opportunity-focused and innovation-oriented policies

CELCAA is the European Liaison Committee for Agricultural and Agri-Food Trade and, as such, represents at European level the most essential food sectors such as meat and livestock, dairy, cereals, grain, and oilseed trade, eggs, egg whites, and egg yolks, wine and aromatized wine products, hops, tea, and herbal infusions, tobacco, and the craft butcher sector. We further work with national agricultural organizations and represent, in total, more than 25.000 agri-food producers and traders in Europe.

Presently, European and global agri-food trade operates in an environment of continuous polarity. Climate change and geopolitical conflicts have shifted areas of agricultural and agri-food production, modes of transport, and processing, with severe impacts on food and nutrition availability, affordability, and security. Therefore, robust and sustainable agri-food trade in this context will play an even more essential role in the future. At the same time, this essential part of the supply chain is struggling for continued public and policy recognition, as often trade policies are designed because of decisions made in other policy areas, rather than looking at the specific challenges of agri-food trade.

We'd therefore like to suggest that the European Commission evolves the debate on future "sustainable agri-food trade" within the Green Deal and particularly the "Farm2Fork" strategy, as well as in an international context. Only a continuous confrontation and debate with this complex subject will help secure a fair and enabling food production and trading environment. This debate must happen with an interdisciplinary approach at the interface of agriculture, trade, health, climate, environment, and economic growth, and it is recommended to dedicate a concrete and objective taskforce to this subject.

Dedicated policy making must take place further with a focus on opportunities and incentives, to allow the agri-food trade sector to enjoy similar advantages as other sectors from greening oriented trade and investment policies. Provisions such as facilitations in other policy areas, e.g., for "trade with environmental" goods, have helped sectors and countries lift environmentally friendly industries and created new opportunities. A similar dedicated approach is needed for agri-food trade to create greener and more sustainable supply chains. Out-of-the-box thinking will be required and emerging in all areas, such as circular agricultural trade, tariff policies, investment policies, trade facilitation and transport, or customs policy. This policy debate must continue for both the global and single market spheres.

Eventually, there will need to be synergy between the environmental sustainability and food security debates rather than take place in separate fora, to ensure the coherence of future policy making within the Green Deal and beyond and thus allow for true resilience of our agri-food system."

CELCAA is dedicated to further defining and discussing "sustainable agri-food trade" and will continue to support the debate with progressive and opportunity-oriented reflections.