



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 28 February 2017
(OR. en)

6790/17

AGRI 96
AGRIFIN 20
AGRIORG 24

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Difficult situation in the fruit market
- Information from the Polish delegation

Delegations will find in Annex a note from the Polish delegation on the above subject to be presented under "Any other business" at the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 6 March 2017.

Difficult situation in the fruit market

Poland expresses serious concern about the development of the situation in the fruit market.

Currently, this market faces serious problems related to the continuation of the ban introduced by the Russian Federation and regarding the import of certain agricultural products originating in the European Union states. In case of Poland, these problems affect most severely the apple production sector.

In the years preceding the embargo, the Polish export of apples to the market of the Russian Federation reached the level of 800 thousand tonnes. This means that about 60% of apples exported from Poland went to the Russian market. Finding alternative markets to such a large consumer as the Russian Federation remains a major challenge, not only because of the matter of scale, but, in particular, because of the issue of the product range specificity. The expectations of consumers from the states whose markets could provide an alternative to the Russian market, are often significantly different from the expectations of Russian consumers, and meeting these expectations requires time and effort. It is about, in particular, the variety of offered apples. The variety restructuring of offered apples is a time- and cost-consuming operation which, in the face of the growing crisis in the market of these fruit, is a very difficult challenge for the producers.

The average prices offered to the Polish producers for table and industrial apples in the current season were significantly lower than the average prices offered in the previous season, when the EU regulations more effectively responding to the challenges related to the Russian embargo were in force. The decline in the prices of apples from the 2016 harvest, when compared to the prices of apples from the 2015 harvest, took place due to a significant reduction in the quantity of apples which may be withdrawn by the Polish producers using EU aid. The Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/921 of 10 June 2016 *laying down further temporary exceptional support measures for producers of certain fruit and vegetables* (OJ L 154 of 11.6.2016, pp. 3-20), which determines the rules of functioning of the support mechanism for the 2016/2017 season, provided for much more modest resources than for the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 seasons. The quantities of fruit and vegetables, which may be covered by the operations resulting in the reduced supply, allocated to the individual Member States pursuant to the aforementioned Regulation, have been reduced by 70% when compared to those that applied in relation to the 2015/2016 season.

In connection with the above, Poland again requests for amendment of the Commission Delegated Regulation 2016/921 as regards the quantity of apples and pears which was allocated to Poland and which, pursuant to the aforementioned Regulation, may be covered by the operations resulting in the reduced supply of these fruit so that it corresponded to the quantity allocated to Poland in relation to the previous commercial season (296.2 thousand tonnes).
