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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Problems with increasing agricultural imports from Ukraine  
*- Information from the Polish delegation, on behalf of the Bulgarian, Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian and Slovak delegations*

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Delegations will find in the Annex a document on the above subject to be presented by the Polish delegation under "Any other business" at the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 30 January 2023.

**Information from the Polish delegation, on behalf of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary,  
Poland, Romania, Slovakia  
for the meeting of the Council for Agriculture and Fisheries  
on 30 January 2023, under Any other business**

**Problems with increasing agricultural imports from Ukraine**

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia support Ukraine in its fight against the Russian aggression. As part of the solidarity lanes initiative, we assist our Ukrainian partners in facilitating, to the greatest extent possible, the export of agri-food products, especially cereals, across the EU border to third countries at risk in terms of food security.

We have also introduced a large number of measures to facilitate border controls of agri-food products from Ukraine.

One of the consequences of adopting measures to facilitate imports of products from Ukraine, including the abolition for a year of any customs duties on imports from this country (the ATM measures), was a significant increase in the supplies of Ukrainian products to the EU markets particularly those bordering with Ukraine. At present, more and more signals show that, if not limited, this increase can cause serious difficulties to EU producers in the agricultural sector. Such a situation requires an urgent response, as EU producers have been already affected by the impacts of the war in Ukraine (among others, growing production costs caused by higher prices of fuels, energy and fertilisers).

The arising difficulties affect, in particular, the cereal sector. In the period from January to November 2022, the maize imports from Ukraine to bordering EU member states have risen dramatically compared to previous years, from a few thousand tonnes to several million tonnes. For example, imports to Poland amounted to 1 637,6 thousand tonnes (in the period from January to November 2021, 6 thousand tonnes), imports to Hungary - over 900 thousand tonnes (5 thousand tonnes in 2021), to Slovakia – 250 thousand tonnes (zero tones in January-November 2021), to Bulgaria - 16 742 tonnes versus 361 tonnes in 2021, to Romania – 1 020 thousand tonnes. The large imports of products from one source during the national harvests have caused market disturbances in all member states involved. Part of the imported grain goes to the domestic feed processors which results in the decreased demand for domestic grain.

The overland transport of maize of Ukrainian origin to Western Europe, i.e. to countries facing its shortage, is to a large extent unprofitable, making it difficult to transport large quantities of this cereal abroad.

Wheat imports from Ukraine have significantly grown as well – they were several hundred or even several thousand times higher than in 2021 in some EU Member States. Moreover there is a very serious increase in imports from Ukraine of other agricultural products subject to the ATMs such as sugar, poultry meat, flour, certain dairy products, honey, apple juice, and of other sensitive products like sunflower seeds or rape seeds.

Poland also draws the attention to the very difficult situation on the apple market. Since the introduction of the Russian embargo fruit growers are facing serious problems with the sale of apples. This has been exacerbated with the introduction of the embargo by Belarus and restrictions in access to the Egyptian market. Considering the above we believe that the already difficult situation of Polish apple producers should not be further deteriorated by the increasing low price import from Ukraine which can be prevented by the entry price mechanism.

Bulgaria draws attention to sunflower imports from Ukraine which have increased to 804 000 tonnes for the period January-December 2022, compared to 36 074 for the same period in 2021. Ukraine is becoming the main supplier of sunflower in Bulgaria, which makes it difficult to sell Bulgarian sunflower and contributes to a decrease in prices on the domestic market. In the context of the overall inflation while the production costs are rising, prices of sunflower seed in Bulgaria have dropped by 45% compared to the same period during the previous year. Despite low prices and considering that Bulgarian oil processors are working at 100% capacity data shows that 77% of the Bulgarian sunflower remains unprocessed at the warehouses. Romania, normally a big sunflower producer, still imported 650 thousand tonnes of sunflower seeds.

Considering the above, we believe that the European Commission should propose instruments to prevent the increasing difficulties of EU producers caused to a large extent by a very serious increase in imports of Ukrainian agricultural products to the EU market. The following measures should be considered to address the situation:

- compensation for farmers negatively affected by the increased inflow of products from Ukraine to the markets of EU Member States;
- a flexible approach of the EC to the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy by EU Member States, including in the area of coupled payments;
- sealing solidarity lanes so that Ukrainian agricultural products transit EU Member States and reach destination markets, without remaining on the EU internal market causing disturbances on the markets of EU countries;
- creation of temporary warehouses and new transport corridors, including by rail; financial support for this purpose;
- assistance to Ukraine that would not cause difficulties for the agricultural sector in the Member States, including financial support, further assistance in transit, supply of means of production, assistance in adapting to EU requirements.

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia confirm their readiness to continue, together with the EC, to work on such types of assistance to Ukraine which would not simultaneously cause difficulties for the agricultural sector in EU Member States.