



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Excessive maize imports from Ukraine
- Information from the Polish delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Polish delegation on the above-mentioned subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 18 November 2019.

Excessive maize imports from Ukraine

Excessive imports of maize have a negative impact on the Polish cereals market. Farmers face problems selling their cereals, moreover the prices obtained are low. In recent years around half of the maize imported to Poland originated in Ukraine. Between January and August 2019 the total imports of maize to Poland amounted to 292 thousand tonnes, of which 129 thousand tonnes originated in Ukraine.

We wish to draw the attention of the Commission to the fact that Ukraine is becoming an important player on European agricultural markets. According to USDA estimates, the wheat harvest in Ukraine in 2019/2020 season shall amount to 29 million tonnes and the maize harvest to 36 million tonnes. At the same time it is expected that exports of cereals from Ukraine will hit record highs. It is worth pointing out that already ca. 60% of maize in the EU market is of Ukrainian origin. The country abundant in “chernoziem”, with favourable climate and low cost of labour and transportation is becoming a very serious competitor for EU agriculture, in particular for a country bordering Ukraine, like Poland.

The average price of maize in Poland between January and August 2019 amounted to PLN 716/tonne, while the average price of maize from Ukraine amounted to PLN 638/tonne. At the turn of October and November this year maize price in Poland was PLN 594/tonne and was 6% lower than last month, 15% lower than last year and 4% lower than 2 years ago.

Farmers in Poland apply high environmental and climate standards in agricultural production. They find it hard to compete with cheaper maize farmed in other production conditions, while the intensified imports inspire social unrest, particularly if it happens in the harvest period.

Therefore Poland requests an analysis of the above mentioned problems connected with excessive imports of maize to the Polish market, as well as information whether, according to the EC assessment, Ukraine applies European standards in terms of plant protection products used in cereal production. The issue of unfavourable impact of cereals from behind the Eastern border is regularly raised by Poland on the EU forum. Furthermore, Poland requests that no new preferences be granted for access to the EU market for imports of cereals, including maize.