

Mrs Ursula VON DER LEYEN  
President of the European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1049 Brussels  
Belgium

Strasbourg, 21 February 2024

Madam President,

We, the undersigned, wish to express the concerns of several EU agricultural sectors that are seriously affected by unlimited imports from Ukraine, following the implementation of autonomous trade measures (ATMs).

First, we would like to stress that the Russian aggression against Ukraine is intolerable and that, as Europeans, it is our duty, but also our interest to continue to support the Ukrainian people in their fight.

The European Commission has recently announced automatic safeguard measures against Ukrainian imports of eggs, poultry and sugar due to the explosion of arrivals of these goods on the European continent since the beginning of the war, which are significantly destabilizing the market and prices.

While we welcome these measures, they nevertheless have several shortcomings that would need to be corrected before the final approval of the agreement, to take into account the diversity of sectors facing major difficulties but also to ensure concrete results.

First of all, the list of goods concerned remains incomplete today, since cereals and oilseeds are missing, which are also very much affected by the increase of Ukrainian exports to the European market.

The difficulties faced by producers in EU neighboring countries are spreading to other Member States and are worsening month after month.. Cereal imports from Ukraine in July-September 2023 were 30-40% higher than those recorded in the same period of the previous year despite the fact that trade liberalization was already underway. At present, the price of Ukrainian maize and feed wheat arriving to the port of Odessa ranges between EUR 150 and EUR 160/t, compared to an average of EUR 180 for EU productions. Even with high freight costs,

Ukrainian cereals arrive on the European market in a very competitive way, which weighs downwards on the prices paid to cereal producers in the EU. It is therefore essential to extend the list of products which should benefit from protective measures

We would also like to highlight that the average period 2021-2022 and not the years 2022-2023 would be more convenient for the calculation of the import thresholds, in order to better take into account the reality of markets, both for cereals and for the goods already covered by the safeguard measures. All quantities above those thresholds should circulate within the EU only in transit to third countries. This would ensure outlets for Ukrainian goods while protecting European cereal producers in a more appropriate way.

Furthermore, the period for triggering automatic safeguard measures should be shortened from 21 days to 10 days and a system for pre-determination of the destination of Ukrainian imports with a deposit should be put in place.

Finally, we also consider it necessary for the European Union to do everything in its power to improve the corridors for Ukrainian agricultural products orientated to developing countries, whose supply has been severely affected by the Russian aggression.

The measures proposed by the Commission are a good signal, but we kindly ask you to take into consideration our requests to avoid any prejudice to EU producers while maintaining our strong support for our Ukrainian ally.

Thank you very much for your attention

Yours sincerely,

Anne SANDER (EPP; FR) & Irène TOLLERET (Renew; FR)

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*That letter was sent in copy to:*

*Mr Valdis Dombrovskis  
Vice-President  
European Commissioner for Trade*