Re: Concerns on agri-food in aircraft dispute

Dear Commissioner,

Copa Cogeca would like to raise serious concerns regarding the escalation of the trade dispute between the EU and the US, urging both sides to rapidly lift the damaging retaliatory tariffs imposed on agri-food products as a result of the WTO civil aircraft dispute.

Agri-food sectors are facing unprecedented challenges due to the prolonged effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many trade uncertainties, like the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation agreement.

In response to the countermeasures implemented by the European Union on 10th November 2020, the US administration enlarged the list of EU agri-food products already subject to 25% ad valorem duties on 30th October 2020. These new duties have already been in place since Tuesday 12th January 2021, increasing the pressure on a sector that has already suffered severely throughout 2020, and expanding the basket of agri-food products targeted by the US duties.

The US is the primary export destination for European high value-added agri-food products, with exports exceeding €20 bn in 2019, as well as a critical source for supply of agricultural commodities and ingredients. However, since October 2019, the EU agri-food chain has been severely impacted by the 25% ad valorem retaliatory tariffs weighing on trade flows and competitiveness on top of the economic slowdown and closure of food services due to COVID-19.

This dispute did not originate in the agri-food sector and the sector must not be dragged into this conflict. We call on the EU and the USTR to eliminate all retaliatory tariffs in place on agri-food exports and to avoid further escalation of trade tensions.

In the meantime, in order to bring some relief to the agri-food sector and adequately support the European farmers and cooperatives, we call on the Commission to take all the necessary measures, including financial support, to offset the losses resulting from the US duties implemented since 18th October 2019 and avoid a rapid deterioration of market conditions.
We would like to take this opportunity to request a meeting with you in the near future, to further detail our concerns and discuss potential solutions to this long-running issue.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Data