

Briefing for Commissioner Wojciechowski

MEETING WITH Personal Data Protection

Personal Data Protection

FoodDrinkEurope

7 October 2020, 9:30-10:30
(video call)

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SCENE SETTER

- You are meeting with **Personal Data Protection**, **Personal Data Protection** FoodDrinkEurope **Personal Data Protection** Nestlé (Head of Zone Europe, Middle East & North Africa).

Also present at the meeting: **Personal Data Protection** (FoodDrinkEurope **Personal Data Protection** Pepsico **Personal Data Protection**); **Personal Data Protection** (FoodDrinkEurope **Personal Data Protection**, Acesur **Personal Data Protection**); and **Personal Data Protection** (FoodDrinkEurope **Personal Data Protection**).

- This briefing covers the following topics:
 - measures to tackle the impact of COVID-19:** this is an opportunity to express appreciation for the **good working relations** and frequent communication between the food and drink industry and the Commission throughout the **Covid-19** crisis. This allowed the EU response to be more effective, to keep products on the shelves for consumers, to the benefit also of the food industry itself.
 - Farm-to-Fork Strategy:** The Farm to Fork Strategy **calls on all agri-food operators to make changes**, including the food industry. These are **necessary changes**: we have to be more sustainable and to improve our diets. There is an **opportunity** here for the changes to benefit also the food supply chain. We welcome the food and drink industry's constructive input on making effective policy.
 - agri-food trade performance:** inform that the Covid crisis has slowed down the normal impressive growth of EU agri-food trade. Exceptionally high exports of pig meat to China as well as of wheat, in particular to MENA countries, helped to mitigate the effects of pandemic as well as of decreasing trade to the UK and the US, our main trading partners.
 - Art. 4.1 a)* 

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TOPIC: Crisis measures and Farm to Fork Strategy

KEY MESSAGES

1. Measures to tackle the impact of COVID-19:

- The agri-food supply chain faced a difficult period due to the **Covid-19 pandemic**, in particular in its early stages.
- We see however that food continued to be delivered to citizens and we did not have major market disruption. In other words, **we avoided layering a food crisis on top of the health crisis**.
- This is a success for all working in the food supply chain, and we believe we have also contributed as policy makers to allow the food chain's continued operation. And our existing policies also showed their strength: with the **CAP and the EU single market** food continued to be produced, and food continued to be delivered across the EU.
- You as **food industry played your role successfully**, and we are conscious and appreciative of this. FoodDrinkEurope representatives have been in frequent contact with Commission services from the beginning, and this collaboration contributed to resolving quickly any issues that were arising.
- This said, **some sectors were hit hard by the crisis**. In some cases demand for products all but disappeared overnight, with the closure of food services. We also see that large-scale changes took place in distribution, with much of consumer demand shifting to e-commerce, proximity retail, and local production.
- The Commission and Member States acted quickly to address issues. We now have a **package of measures** that seem to have helped stabilise the markets. We of course **remain vigilant** and stand ready to act if further issues arise.
- We should not forget that **other challenges remain on the table**. The possibility of a hard Brexit, the ASF outbreak in Germany and the ongoing uncertainties to the international trading system being prime examples.

2. Farm-to-Fork Strategy:

- The **Farm to Fork Strategy** already calls for lessons to be learned from the Covid-19 pandemic, which will be taken up in the initiative to develop a **contingency plan** to ensure food security during crises, and in the tabling of a **legislative framework for sustainable food systems**, to be delivered in 2023.
- The Commission also continues its work on the implementation of the Directive on **Unfair Trading Practices** and the new rules on **market transparency** along the food supply chain. These are clearly issues that continue topical, and you will see this reflected in the Farm to Fork Strategy
- We see too that many **consumers want to make healthier and more sustainable choices**. The Farm to Fork Strategy reflects this. If we do this right it can be of benefit not only to the planet and to public health, but also to our food supply chain operators.
- As you will know, **we consult extensively** on our policies and we seek to make policy based on evidence. You and other stakeholders will be invited to contribute in public consultations and other ways as we progress in our work.

Why a Farm to Fork Strategy?

- The **Farm-to-Fork** Strategy, together with the Biodiversity Strategy, aims to ensure such a resilient food system and translate the **Green Deal into action**.
- **The strategy recognises that EU farmers** have made great efforts to produce in a **more sustainable** way – and successfully so.
- **Agriculture is directly affected by climate change** and depends on high-quality eco-systems. We **cannot afford to be complacent**.
- That is why the Commission proposes **targets for 2030 to drive our common policy agenda**. The Commission believes it will be necessary to significantly **reduce the use and risks of chemical plant protection products**, as well as the use of **fertilisers and antibiotics**, while increasing the area under **organic farming**.
- I would like to recall that the Farm to Fork Strategy is not a proposal for a new agricultural policy. It is a **vision** for reforming the entire food system in a sustainable way. It aims to design **fairer, healthier and environmentally friendly food systems in the EU by 2030**.
- The Farm to Fork Strategy envisages a **just transition** to a sustainable food supply system. It explicitly recognises the need for **fair economic returns** in the supply chain as one of the three objectives.
- Therefore, the Commission will **closely monitor food security, as well as competitiveness of farmers and food operators** closely throughout the process and adjust as needed.

Farm to Fork and consumer demand for sustainability?

- To deliver on this ambitious vision, we need first and foremost a **sustainable consumer demand**.
- That is why a wide range of actions in the strategy **focuses on consumers, processing and retail**. On how to help consumers make healthier and more environmentally friendly choices.
- Citizens' expectations are evolving and driving significant change in the food market, with a **growing demand for sustainable products** (e.g. organic, quality, locally produced, etc.). This will be an opportunity for farmers to sell products with higher value-added and reinforce connection with consumers.
- The strategy should also be an useful help in better integrating the **value chains by linking local and regional primary production** to value added processing and retail. This should also help rural areas to maintain its farming population.

What measures will the Commission take to shift consumption to healthy and sustainable dietary choices?

- Consumers themselves have power to influence the type of food produced, how it is produced and where it is produced. Indeed, **citizens are increasingly asking for healthy diets from a healthy planet.**
- To encourage consumers to make healthy choices and to encourage the food industry to offer healthy food products, the Commission will propose **mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling.**
- The Commission will stimulate **reformulation of processed food**, including the setting of maximum levels for certain nutrients, and set nutrient profiles to restrict promotion of food high in salt, sugar or fat.
- The Commission will also examine ways to **harmonise voluntary green claims** and develop a **sustainable food-labelling framework** integrating nutritional, climate, environmental and social aspects.
- To improve the availability and price of sustainable food and to promote healthy and sustainable diets, including organic products, in schools and public institutions, the Commission will determine the best modalities for setting **minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement.**

How will the EU sustainability label help farmers?

- Labelling schemes and marketing standards have a high potential to link production methods on the farm to (premium) consumer demand and enhance opportunities
- For example, **EU animal welfare labelling** has the potential to translate farm sustainability efforts and investments into higher returns to farmers.
- Development of an **EU sustainable food label** will highlight the level of EU production standards and quality criteria that EU farmers meet. It will incentivise trade partners to ensure that food imported into the EU has been produced in a sustainable way.

What is the intention of the Farm to Fork on the issue of mandatory origin labelling for certain products? Will this be harmonised at EU level?

- **Consumers are increasingly interested in the origin of certain food products** as demonstrated by the number of national measures in this area since 2016. This is also reflected in the recent European citizens' initiative "Eat original".
- The Commission will consider the possibility to propose **extending mandatory origin or provenance indication** to a defined set of products to be agreed, in accordance with the better regulation rules.

- Any proposal in this regard will have to be in compliance with the EU's **international obligations**, including those under WTO rules, and be subject to a comprehensive **impact assessment**, including concerning potential impacts on EU and international trade.

What other relevant initiatives for the food industry are there in the Farm to Fork Strategy?

- As part of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission is working on the development of a **corporate governance framework**, which will include a requirement for the food industry to integrate sustainability into corporate strategies.
- Simultaneously an **EU code for responsible business and marketing conduct** is being developed. The EU code will contain a monitoring framework.
- These initiatives are led by **DG JUST and DG GROW**, respectively. AGRI is an associated DG and supportive of the work.
- The work of the Commission is **at an early stage**, but all the regular steps – like a public consultation and an impact assessment – are foreseen to allow the participation of all stakeholders and to create a solid evidence-base.
- The Commission will develop its work in the spirit of the Green Deal, base it on the guidance of the Farm to Fork Strategy, and more generally follow the Better Regulation agenda to make evidence-based decisions.

BACKGROUND

Covid-19 Pandemic

Commission and Member States measures:

- In March the Commission acted to ensure food security and the preservation of the single market through **Guidelines on border management measures** and continuous follow-up meetings with MS.
- A special **temporary state aid framework** increased resources for farmers.
- A number of **flexibility measures** concerning direct payments, rural development and on-the-spot-checks.
- The Commission adopted **a package of market measures on 30 April** consisting of 12 separate Commission regulations. They are aimed to stabilise markets, through **private storage aid** for dairy and meat products, **flexibility in the implementation of market support programmes** and **crisis cooperation measures** in such sectors as the milk, potatoes, live plants/flowers.
- Finally, the Commission proposed **exceptional flexibility and simplification in the use of the rural development fund**, to extend the scope of support to rural SMEs/businesses. This was adopted by the co-legislator on 24 June 2020.

Unfair trading practices

- The Directive lists 16 well-defined unfair trading practices which are either blacklisted or forbidden if the parties did not clearly agree on these practices beforehand.
- An important point in the transposition process is the designation of the national enforcement authority, which must be vested with powers to stop infringements and impose fines.
- The new rules will be **evaluated by November 2025**, and may, if appropriate, lead to legislative changes.
- FoodDrinkEurope has been **generally supportive** of the new unfair trading practices Directive.

Market Transparency

- Improvements in market transparency put agricultural producers and food SMEs in the food supply chain on **a more equal footing** with their larger counterparts.
- An amending Regulation was adopted in 1 October 2019. The new rules will **apply from 1 January 2021**.
- The legal amendments increase transparency **in key sectors** (meat, dairy, fruit and vegetables, etc.) and, crucially, **along the length of the food supply chain**, for buying and selling prices and certain quantities.
- This increase in market transparency is one of three elements of a package to improve the functioning of the food supply chain, the two others being the Directive on unfair trading practices and improvements to the rules for producer cooperation.
- FoodDrinkEurope has **opposed** the new rules, citing as reasons that there is already sufficient transparency in the supply chain, concerns about negative effects on competition, and that the new rules would not help address power imbalances in the supply chain.

TOPIC: Trade related agricultural issues

KEY MESSAGES

1. Agri-food trade performance:

- So on the general situation, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major economic disruption, including for agriculture and international trade.
- While our food supply has never been seriously at risk, the pandemic has made stronger public calls for more resilience in our agri-food sector and for more sustainable food systems, with more emphasis on regional production, local employment and shorter supply chains within the overall mix of sources for our food.
- At the same time, international cooperation and trade proved to be essential elements for ensuring food security. There is no contradiction between benefitting from market opportunities by developing short supply chains and benefitting from trade opportunities. The EU has struck this healthy balance for many years.
- Despite the COVID induced recession, EU27 international trade in agri-food products has continued to grow in the first five months of 2020. Between January and May 2020, the value of EU27 agri-food exports totalled €75.8 billion (a rise of 2% compared to the same period in 2019), while the value of imports increased to €52.7 billion (a rise of 1%).
- I will now give you a short overview about state of play in our international relations. First on the major success we have achieved by concluding the agreement with China on the protection of Geographical Indications (GIs).

Art. 4.1 a)

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What is the state of play on the study on the cumulative impact of trade agreements?

- There is clear evidence that agricultural exports have a positive impact on jobs in the agri-food sector. As confirmed by the cumulative study carried out in 2016, EU agriculture has a clear interest in maintaining an ambitious international trade agenda so as not to lose existing market shares to our trading competitors. Major additional benefits are expected from increased export opportunities for processed food, enhanced protection of Geographical Indications, and the tackling of SPS barriers for EU exports.
- The study also confirmed that the EU approach to keep a firm line on limited access for sensitive products, such as beef and rice, was – and remains – justified. EU negotiators know they need to manage the expectations of their partners in third countries and are determined to secure adequate protection for those sensitive products, which are of very considerable economic and social value to various Member States.
- We believe this objective was fulfilled in the negotiations with Mercosur.
- Commission services are working on an up-date of the 2016 study to take into account the latest developments in EU trade negotiations, in particular to integrate the results of negotiations with Mercosur, Japan and Mexico. The up-date is expected this autumn.
- I am committed to present the results of this study to the Agri-Fish Council, once it is published.

Cumulative study: Which agreements will be covered in the study?

- study only covers a selection of major trade agreements either just in force, recently concluded, or under negotiation, or likely to be launched in the near future.
- In the 2020 study 12 trade agreements will be covered simultaneously: Canada, Japan, Vietnam, Mercosur, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, Chile, Malaysia.
- regarding the United States, as the EU position is not to include agriculture in a trade negotiation, the updated study will not include an FTA (TTIP-like or a light version), contrary to the 2016 study. The update of the agreement with Turkey will also not be considered. The modernisation of the FTA with Chile will however be added, as well as a future FTA with Malaysia.

Cumulative study: How is Brexit accounted for?

- This study is not about Brexit.
- As indicated in the Political Declaration and in the negotiation directives of the EU (and of the UK), a tariff free, quota free trade agreement is envisaged (conditional upon robust provisions ensuring a level playing field and an agreement on fisheries, among others), making this the default or preferred option.
- This study will hence assume duty free quota free (DFQF) trade between the EU and the UK, both in the baseline and in the tested scenarios. As the analysis is comparative, no quantitative specifics of the EU-UK relationship will be reflected in the report.
- While we are aware that the DFQF trade relationship will generate additional friction when compared to participation in the single market, we will not reflect this in the modelling approach, as this adds an additional strong assumption.
- In addition to the DFQF assumption, we envisage that both the EU-27 and the UK will apply the apportioned WTO TRQs.
- For the trade relationship of the UK with the rest of the world, we assume the proper implementation of the trade deals that the UK had already secured with third countries at the time of starting the study.

Cumulative study: How is the Covid19 crisis accounted for?

- This study is not about the impact of the Covid19 crisis.
- We look at the impact of the trade agreements in 2030. This makes less relevant taking into account the crisis.

Implementation of agreements: Singapore

- The Singapore-EU FTA entered into force on 21 November 2019.
- It is an important agreement for EU agri-food exports, not only in Singapore but also in the whole ASEAN region.
- Singapore is a valued partner for the EU and is the most important trading partner in ASEAN, accounting for 24% of EU-ASEAN trade in goods (48 bn EUR)
- Singapore also plays a leading role in Southeast Asia as a financial centre and transportation hub.
- This agreement will enhance our bilateral relationship, boost EU commitment to ASEAN, and is a sign of support for the rules based international order.
- This FTA will create great opportunities for some EU agri-food products like wines, spirits, confectionery, dairy and meat.
- There are currently 1388 European GIs registered in Singapore and protected through the agreement.

- However, several of our GIs are being challenged by Third Parties, either through legal proceedings at the Intellectual Property Office or at the High Court of Singapore.
- The Commission is very concerned by these on-going procedures and is following very closely the development of the situation.

Implementation of agreements: South Korea

- The conclusion of the FTA with South Korea is a success story in terms of agri-food trade for both the EU and Korea. Korea is an important partner for the EU not only on the global stage but, in particular, in the Asian region.
- We are fully engaged with Korea to make sure that the implementation of the FTA enhances all expected benefits for both sides. The EU-Korea FTA protects a relatively short list of 162 EU Geographical Indications (GIs). Since 2014, the EU has tried to add 46 names. After long discussions currently preparatory works are on-going to update the GI list and add additional geographical indications from both sides.
- On SPS measures, access for EU beef has been raised on every occasion by the Commission. In 2019 the market has been finally opened for the Netherlands and Denmark, however for other Member States the approval process is dragging along for years. We will continue using all possible avenues to obtain firm assurances towards the approval of beef from the other Member States.

Implementation of agreements: Canada (CETA)

- The comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) entered into application in 2017. The Agreement has significantly improved market access for many EU foods and beverages in Canada.
- Since then, EU exports of agri-food products have increased steadily across a broad range of products. We have registered growth both for traditional exports and for products which were hardly traded with Canada before CETA. To name just one example, the EU has become a net exporter of bovine meat to Canada.
- That said, more can be done to reap the full benefits of CETA. EU exporters are still facing trade irritants on dairy products and alcoholic beverages, as well as sanitary and phytosanitary restrictions and issues with the protection of geographical indications. The Commission is actively engaging with Canada to find a way forward on all of those issues.

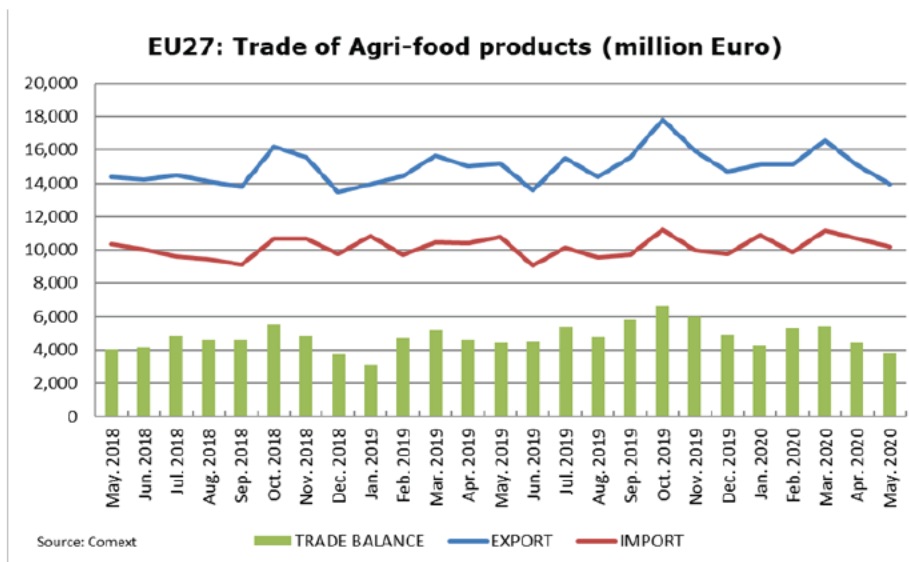
- Canada is an important partner with whom we have been working constructively in WTO during the COVID crisis to avoid unhelpful trade barriers. We could also work closely with that country in the implementation of the international pillar of the farm-to-fork strategy. I had a first, positive exchange of views with Minister Bibeau in that respect in July.

Art. 4.1 a)



BACKGROUND

1. Agri-food trade performance.



January - May 2020: EU27 agri-food trade on a slight downward trend

During the first five months of 2020, EU27 agri-food trade (exports plus imports) reached a value of **EUR 128.5 billion**; i.e. 1.6% more than in January-May 2019. The current growth remained to be driven by higher agri-food exports which increased by 2.1% compared to the corresponding period in 2019, reaching **EUR 75.8 billion**. EU27 imports attained **EUR 52.7 billion**, 0.9% higher than the same five months period in 2019. However, the monthly values of EU27 exports and imports continued to fall in May 2020 by 7.5% and 4.5%, respectively, below the level of previous month, corresponding to the economic slowdown triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. ASF case in Germany and its impact on EU27 exports:

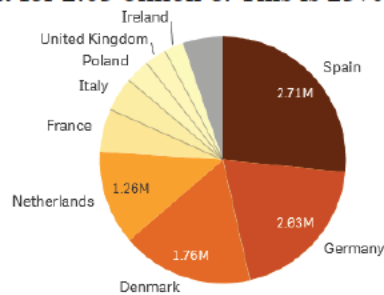
The dead wild boar was found in the Spree-Neiße district, a few km from the German border with Poland. The animal found was already in a state of decomposition.

Veterinary restrictions apply according to EU legislation. Intensive search for further dead animals is going on to understand to what extent the wild boar population is infected and to further define the restricted area.

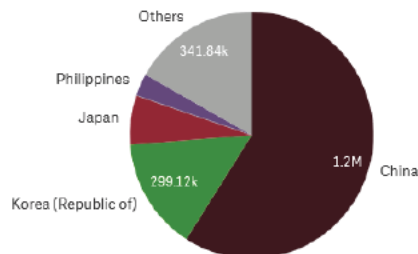
The region concerned is of low pig density and far away from the pig production regions of Germany. Nevertheless, there are pig farms in the region that are put under surveillance and movement restrictions.

Even if regionalisation applies within the EU, there is a risk that China takes disproportionate measures and restricts pigmeat trade with the EU. In such a case the market effect would be severe. So far no information is available.

DE export volumes are very significant. In 2019, Germany exported 1.2 million tonnes of pigmeat for 2.03 billion €. This is 23% of the EU's pigmeat exports.



Germany's main trade partner for pigmeat is China. In 2019, 600 000 tonnes representing a value of 1.2 billion € were shipped to China. This represents around 60% of the DE pigmeat exports.



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5. State-of-play on the cumulative study:

The Commission regularly runs impact assessments at various stages of trade negotiations for each agreement separately. In addition, a study taking account of different trade negotiations simultaneously for the agricultural sector was published in November 2016. It was carried out by the Commission Joint Research Center.

The aim of this economic study was to provide direction and broad magnitude of expected joint impacts of 12 trade agreements, subject to scenario assumptions and limitations of the exercise. The 2016 study focused on trade agreements which were not yet implemented, ranging from some that had already been negotiated (Canada, Vietnam), to some at various stages of negotiation (USA, Mercosur, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines), while including two that were still to be negotiated (Australia, New Zealand) and two that involved the modernisation of existing agreements (Turkey, Mexico).

The study is a tool to inform future negotiating strategy by considering theoretical scenarios that include tariff cuts of 50% and 25% and no quantitative restrictions (no Tariff Rate Quotas - TRQs).

In the meantime, agreements with Canada, Japan and Vietnam entered into force. Others have been concluded (Mexico, Mercosur) or are being negotiated (Australia, New-Zealand, Chile). Other negotiations have been put on hold or are not advancing for various reasons (USA, Turkey, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines).

In view of the reaction of several Member States to the conclusion of negotiations with Mercosur, Commissioner Hogan announced an up-date of 2016 study to be delivered by the end of 2020, to take into account new developments in trade policy.

The new study is currently ongoing and results are expected this Autumn.

Following agreements will be covered: Canada, Japan, Vietnam, Mexico and Mercosur (outcome of the negotiations); Chile, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand (theoretical outcome).

What is the methodology of the study and what scenarios will it analyse?

- study based on simulations run with two economic models (general and partial equilibrium).
- two scenarios analysed (conservative and ambitious), reflecting different levels of ambition in the negotiations: expected to provide a broad range of the possible impacts.
- definition of scenarios: actual trade deal for concluded negotiations (Canada, Japan, Vietnam, Mercosur, Mexico); for the remaining FTAs, full tariff liberalisation for majority of tariff lines, partial tariff cut for sensitive products.
- difference between conservative and ambitious scenarios: different % of tariff lines subject to full liberalisation + different rate of tariff cut for sensitive products (25% vs. 50% cut).

Why are not all trade scenarios based on TRQ volumes?

- For agreements still under negotiation, with undetermined outcome, or those to be launched, not possible to identify a realistic scenario with precise TRQ volumes.
- partial tariff cuts for sensitive products is a more theoretical approach, but allows to keep consistent approach for all trade agreements, and symmetry between the EU and trade partners.

Will results at MS or regional level be available?

Due to constraints linked to the choice of the models and limited time available for the exercise, results only available for the EU as a whole.

Why do we not cover all agricultural products with the same degree of disaggregation?

- We are bound by product coverage and disaggregation available in the models we use.
- Partial equilibrium model – providing most detailed product-specific results – does not cover following main sectors: fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil, specialised crops, processed agricultural products.

- However: general equilibrium model additionally provides overall trade impacts for fruit and vegetables (as one single sector) and wine (within the category "beverages and tobacco") — whereas olive oil, and other products are included in larger categories, with specific results difficult to be disentangled.

What are the caveats of the study?

- in general terms: study based on economic models, which only provide simplified representation of reality and based on a number of assumptions.

- more specifically, main caveats are:

- 1) no analysis of effects of Non Tariff Measures (NTMs) /SPS reduction (underestimation of impacts)
- 2) scenarios based on partial tariff cuts rather than TRQs (not fully realistic)
- 3) limited geographical disaggregation (EU-only) and product coverage/aggregation (some products not covered, or only at very aggregated level)
- 4) Brexit assumption of Duty Free Quota Free trade without friction

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8. State-of-play in Africa agenda:

Cooperation with Africa

1. Policy dialogue examples

- Our cooperation on policy dialogue has materialized in two concrete achievements: the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) and the regular AU EU Agricultural Ministerial Conferences (2016 in Noordwijk-NL, 2018 and 2019 in Rome back to back to FAO Ministerial) - agriculture is the only sector where this regular dialogue on policy making is taking.
- The work of the TFRA resulted in a set of recommendations (e.g. enhanced cooperation with African farmers' organization, agrifood-business platform, actions to support the African strategy for GIs, LEADER projects in Africa), which fed into the work of the 3rd AU EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference that took place on 21 June 2019 in Rome. Over 500 high-level representatives and stakeholders from both continents were present, together with 27 Ministers and 39 ambassadors.
- The main outcome of the Conference was the Joint declaration which, for the first time, contains the AU EU Rural Transformation Action Agenda (the AU EU Summit in November 2017 failed to endorse the Action plan) to be jointly implemented. This is as well the first time the two Commissioners sign on behalf of the Member States a Joint declaration, and whose implementation will involve a broad variety of stakeholders.
- In addition, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a political flagship of the African Union to which EU is providing full support. The AU EU dialogue on agrifood (and accompanying measures related to regional agrifood value chains) are a valuable contribution to this process of change for regional integration.

2. Task Force Rural Africa and Covid19 update recommendations

- The Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA) was established in 2018 to advise on how best to contribute to sustainable development in Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy. The TFRA report, published in March 2019, was framed against the reality of Africa's huge challenge in creating sufficient jobs and income to meet the needs of their population projected to double over the next thirty years. Notwithstanding its many challenges, Africa is considered as a continent of opportunity. Hence the report stressed the critical importance of **transforming Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy** as part of a wider economic transformation, and suggested that an **innovative partnership** between Africa and Europe, operating at the three levels of

people to people, business to business and government to government, should play a critical role in that transformation. The original TFRA report recommended that four strategic areas of action should underpin the transformation of Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy: 1) A territorial approach for income and job creation; 2) Sustainable land and natural resources management, and climate action. 3) Sustainable transformation of African agriculture. 4) Development of the African food industry and food markets

- **The TFRA has revised its report's recommendations** to take account the COVID-19 and the European Green Deal. The significant change in context led the TFRA to one central conclusion: that food and nutrition security has become of such fundamental political, economic and social importance that it must be at the centre of all future planning and policy. Thus, the AU-EU Summit in October has then the opportunity for both continents to commit to a set of short and long term policies to deliver on this food and nutrition security objective.
- **For the short term** – until end 2021 – the TFRA suggest that the Summit should commit to three high level political priorities: 1) Address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable African populations impacted by COVID-19 and, in certain countries and regions, by the plague of locusts. 2) Lay the foundations of long term sustainable African food systems, through strengthening the resilience of local food systems and the rural economy. 3) Bring climate action to a new level of political priority through committing to an Africa Europe Climate Alliance and agree the early stages of bringing this Alliance into being.
- **For the longer term**, to 2030, the TFRA endorses the proposal that cooperation between Africa and Europe should be based on partnerships in five key areas: green transition; digital transformation; sustainable growth and jobs; peace and governance; and migration and mobility.
- The new Task Force report has been sent to AGRI, TRADE and DEVCO Commissioners and a common reply from these EC services is under preparation.

3. Africa-Europe Alliance Task Forces

Under the Africa Europe Alliance, four new Task Forces will be set up to enhance cooperation and get the private sector and broader civil society closer involved. DG DEVCO has adopted a 'decentralized approach' for this by entrusting the work to a consortium (composed of the Friends of Europe, Mo Ibrahim Foundation and IPAMED).

What is the objective?

The Task Forces (TFs) aim at putting in place a structured dialogue between African and European stakeholders from business, politics and civil society on investment climate and reforms. They cover 4 sectors (digital, transport, energy and agriculture), as well as horizontal issues:

- The **TF on sustainable agriculture** will build on the work of the previous Task Force Rural Africa.
- **High-level dialogues** will use and further develop existing networks; putting into place a communication strategy and conducting further research.
- **Recommendations:** During this 2,5-year process about 40 experts work at issuing policy recommendations for sustainable investment and jobs.

Expected outputs are:

- **4 TF** - digital, transport, energy and agriculture.
- **4 high-level meetings per TF**, in Africa and EU, during these 2,5-years.
- **Policy recommendations** for sustainable investment and jobs.
- **Outreach strategy** to disseminate the work and recommendations.

Why is it relevant?

The TF on sustainable agriculture is relevant to:

- **Promote the European Green Deal as a starting point for a new global growth strategy**, based on reasonable, sustainable, green and balanced development of an interconnected world. During the critical, post-COVID 19 period, there is an urgent need to rethink and overhaul the global food system, including its climate impact. International cooperation is essential for doing so.
- Agriculture and rural areas have an important role to play, in Europe and in Africa, to achieve the **Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals**. Sustainable value chains building on agricultural production have a huge potential to reduce poverty (SDG1), end hunger (SDG2) and create jobs and income. Thus, cooperation with Africa addresses the root causes for migration.
- **Demonstrate that the EU & AU Commissions steer agricultural transformation towards sustainability** (environmental, social and economic), be it within the European Green Deal & Farm to Fork initiative or within the African Agenda 2063 & CAADP process. The Rural Transformation Action Agenda contributes to this green transition on an international level.
- **Strengthen the successful policy cooperation on agriculture between Africa and Europe**, which is already leading the way for other policies. Indeed, regularly organised AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conferences (2016, 2017 and 2019) are a great opportunity to enhance the policy dialogue and to boost the launch of concrete actions that transform agriculture and food systems.
- **Take forward and further implement the recommendations of the Task Force Rural Africa** (Report of March 2019). The Rural Transformation Action Agenda, adopted by Ministers of both continents in June 2019, is an instrument to advance operational cooperation initiatives (in view of the **AU EU Summit in October** and the next AU EU Ministerial Conference in 2021).

4. Rural Transformation Action Agenda

Cooperation on agriculture policy already exists between the AU and the EU, both at technical level and political level. Work builds on experts' recommendations (Task Force Rural Africa report, 2019), regular high-level political dialogues and a joint Action Agenda; adopted in 2019. These existing tools provide the right channels to advance internationally on the European Green Deal and the 'Farm to Fork' strategy.

Under the joint AU EU Rural Transformation Agenda the implementation (together with MS) of the following actions can be highlighted:

- Bring closer European and African agrifood companies, thought the establishments of AU EU agri-business platform.
- Support to the implementation of the AU Continental Strategy on Geographical Indications (GIs) as an instrument for rural development and promotion of value addition in African agrifood.

- Support to the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), particularly to enhance capacity to implement Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures. These can contribute to stimulate sustainable food consumption, promote affordable healthy food for all and create new opportunities for all operators in the food value chain.
- Promote growth in African rural areas and improve governance following a LEADER inspired approach of development. Feed in this way into the proposed “NaturAfrica” initiative aiming at offering opportunities in green sectors for local populations.
- Share knowledge among researchers and policy makers on policy impact analysis, on agricultural economics and policy issues through the PANAP (Pan African Network for economic Analysis of Policies) network. Thus, foster innovation and help green transition.
- Activate education and training to the continent and building capacity, particularly of African women and youth, through the African-European Farmers’ exchange programme.
- The EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) focuses on R&I actions that can contribute to unlock Africa's potential to make rapid progress towards a sustainable, greener agriculture (agroecology) and circular food systems.
- In the preparation of the AU EU Summit (end Oct. 2020), DG AGRI has proposed to revisit this “open” Agenda. Additional actions could be tangible Summit results.

RURAL TRANSFORMATION ACTION AGENDA (June 2019)		
Heading	Deliverables	Concrete activities
Enhancing Responsible Investments in Agriculture and Agribusinesses	1. AU-EU agri-business platform	Establish an AU-EU agribusiness platform within the overarching framework of the Sustainable Business for Africa (SB4A) platform in order to step up to a regional and later pan-African level the existing dialogue between the EU and African private sectors in African countries via EU Delegations, National Chambers of Commerce, European business organisations and national private sector organisations. The ongoing OECD-FAO pilot project implementing the Guidelines for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains (RASC) could complement the platform. This action could also support sustainable value chains, responsible governance of land in line with VGGT guidelines, and responsible investments, including the implementation of the RAI guidelines.
Promoting Research and Innovation	2. Research and Innovation Partnership	1. Launch research and innovation actions in Africa on climate change adaptation (at national, regional and continental levels) under the EU's climate-resilient Development-Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative. These actions could include cooperation with the continental and regional CAADP research and extension organisations, country- and regional-level actions on agroecological intensification, agroforestry, breeding networks, livestock and pastoralism, the surveillance of emerging threats, and the water/energy/food nexus. Furthermore, through the collaboration on the Intra-ACP Climate Services project, new climate services are being built up, making use of the Copernicus Global Land Service. 2. Expand the number of countries involved in the R&I Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and enhance the involvement of the private sector. Research calls at national level for project consortia consisting of European and African partners to support applied research on food environments and sustainable food systems for improved nutrition (triple burden of hunger and malnutrition). 3. Support collaborative research and innovation activities by the EU and Africa, including through professional development and mobility opportunities such as the One Planet Summit fellowship programme, the EU's Marie-Sklodowska-Curie actions and ERASMUS+ and other types of Horizon 2020 projects. 4. The Pan-African Network for economic Analysis of Policies (PANAP) aims to share knowledge on policy impact analysis among the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and African institutions in charge of agricultural policy analysis in sub-Saharan countries. The aim of the network is to foster the capacity to ex-ante evaluate policy effects and measures, with a special focus on rural areas and related farming-food sectors. The collaboration includes training programmes driven by relevant needs in terms of policy measure analysis, e.g. fostering small irrigation programmes in the Sahel.
Fostering Digital Agriculture	3. Digital solutions for agribusiness	Support the creation of an international digital council for food and agriculture. Agriculture ministers present at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) in Berlin in 2019 adopted the proposal that the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) should develop a concept for an international digital council. This should advise countries on digitisation issues and promote the exchange of ideas and experience. The FAO accepted this request and intends to present a concept by the next GFFA.
Stimulating Regional and Continental Sustainable Value Chains	4. Implementation of the Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications in Africa	Enhance cooperation on the action plan for the implementation of the AU's Continental Strategy for Geographical Indications (GI) in Africa. Cooperate on inclusive and sustainable value chains (particularly focusing on smallholder farmers), paying attention to intellectual property rights, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Africa GI training programme - The Africa GI web platform - Support for concrete GI pilot projects
Food Safety Governance	5. Strengthening food safety governance across the continent and supporting food safety governance structures	Discuss the support for the implementation and operationalisation of the AfCFTA, in particular Annex 7 to the Protocol on Trade in Goods: Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures, and for the establishment of appropriate food safety governance structures.
Strengthening Farmers' Organisations and Farmers' Capacities	6. Strengthening African farmers' organisations	Launch a multiannual EU cooperation programme with African continental, regional and national farmer organisations. The programme is to focus on farmers' integration into value chains, while strengthening the capacities of farmer organisations to influence policies and business environments and enhancing the governance, accountability and service delivery of farmer organisations. In this process, special attention will be given to smallholder farmers.
	7. African-European farmers' exchange programme	Within the framework of this exchange, African and European farmers will enhance their skills in operating an agri-business through interactions, targeted seminars and selected training that will expand their knowledge as well as create new networks. Among other things, this will help to enable small-scale farmers and low-skilled rural youth to integrate into local and global sustainable agricultural value chains and evolve to meet the quantity and quality standards required for national and export markets.
Promoting Sustainable Rural Development	8. LEADER Africa Initiative – landscape initiative	Local action programmes to be supported by the EU on a pilot basis in Africa based on similar principles as LEADER programmes in the EU, and allowing African countries and local communities to test and adapt them to their local needs. These programmes should involve the local population in the design and implementation of sustainable territorial development strategies and landscape approaches, including integrated, multi-sectoral projects that address economic, social and environmental objectives, bringing together in a balanced representation the public, private and civil sectors within the local action groups. The EU financial support should concern only collective structures (associations etc.) and not individual, private actors. The landscape approaches will also include capacity building to improve land governance in line with VGGT, and promote inclusive and integrated land-use planning, sustainable land management and land restoration, including further support to the Bonn Challenge and the Great Green Wall initiative; notably through the Regreening Africa programme. All these programmes rely on incorporating trees into croplands and pastoral areas, communal lands and other suitable areas through agroforestry or other forms of climate-smart agriculture and climate-smart forestry.
Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability and Promoting Climate Action in Agriculture	9. Improving environmental sustainability, climate resilience, and biodiversity in the agri sector	1. Implement bilateral pilot projects that demonstrate and promote climate-adapted cultivation methods and drought-tolerant varieties in Morocco and Zambia. 2. Support ten African countries to enhance the integration of measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the sound management of chemicals and waste in agriculture, forestry and fishery policies. Pilot their field implementation in at least four countries.