



PRESS RELEASE

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Driving EU Agri-Food Trade Forward – the view for 2020

Delivering on an ambitious EU trade policy, built on a continually growing demand for high quality EU agri-food policies was the central call from the CELCAA trade conference held in Brussels on 21st March 2019. Echoing this view was Agriculture Commissioner Philip Hogan who noted the *"...unsurpassed safety and quality of our products has made us the leading trader of high quality food and drink products in the world."* His Commission colleague, Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström stressed *"Agri-food trade is growing – and the EU's Free Trade Agreements are contributing to its success. Agricultural products are very popular with our partners. There is growing demand for EU food and wine. Our agreements cover a third of total EU agri-food exports and more than 40% of imports. We have been improving the terms too – because the agreements we are negotiating now are not the same old business"*.

Speaking for the current EU Presidency, Stefan Radu Oprea, Romanian Business Minister insisted that *"EU trade policy can enhance not only the competitiveness of EU agricultural sector, but also its resilience and its attractiveness for the young generation of farmers. We should strive to promote not only our products, but also our values. Finding the right balance and choosing the right partners for EU trade agreements covering the agri-food sector is of paramount importance"*. Speakers from the agri-food trade supported the main calls from the conference for the uptake of an ambitious European trade policy focusing on the implementation of trade deals, on a deep and comprehensive EU-UK agreement and on increasing market access in new export markets while protecting sources of supply.

The conference 'Beyond "Trade for all": Time to promote the benefits of agri-food trade' coincided with the publication by CELCAA of a series of recommendations on trade. The EU agri-food trade association published its [manifesto](#), stressing the need to keep ambitions for free trade high, boost opportunities for sustainable agri-food markets and growth and promote the benefits of trade, whilst at the same time seeking a greater emphasis on the communication aspects of trade agreements and the support and technical assistance given to SMEs in their efforts to access the international market.

Speaking to more than 100 representatives of EU decision-makers, Missions of third countries and industry, a number of representatives from within Celcaa membership set out their goals, aspirations and expectations for the delivery of trade policy in the next 5 years.

The EU is the main exporter and importer of agri-food products, respectively accounting for 138 and 117 billion in 2017. However, agri-food trade faces a number of challenges, including Brexit, growing protectionist policies and increased technical barriers to trade. CELCAA therefore calls for concrete measures to uptake the benefits of trade, such as the rapid conclusion of a deep and comprehensive EU-United Kingdom bilateral agreement; increased market access in key export markets; improvement of trade conditions. The international rules-based system and trade diplomacy shall also be protected by all means, while the EU negotiators should defend a level playing field amongst traders. CELCAA also believes that trade can promote sustainability, especially through predictable EU preferential trade arrangements with developing countries. Finally the high level of investment in promotion policy should be maintained, and coordination amongst public authorities and associations should be reinforced when promoting the benefits of the trade.

Opening the conference Paul Rooke, CELCAA President drew attention to the core mission of CELCAA – the engagement by trade with European decision makers and EU stakeholders to help shape an EU Trade policy, workable for business, which can positively contribute to job creation and growth in the EU.

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CELCAA is an EU umbrella association representing EU organisations covering the trade in cereals, grains, oil, animal feed, wine, meat and meat products, dairy and dairy products, eggs, poultry and game, tobacco, spices and general produces. Members include ASSUC, CEEV, CIBC, COCERAL, EUCOLAIT, EUROPATAT, EUWEP, GAFTA, UECEV, FC2A, FETRATAB, FRESHFEL, FRUCOM, UNION FLEURS, SACAR. CELCAA's main objectives are to facilitate understanding of European decision-makers and stakeholders on the role played by the European traders in agri-commodities; to act as a platform of dialogue and communication with the European Institutions and to encourage public and general interests in agri-trade issues.

For further information:

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