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JOINT STATEMENT

Brexit: EU agri-food chain representatives welcome the deal and call for a swift ratification

Copa and Cogeca, CELCAA and FoodDrinkEurope welcome the agreement that was reached today by the European Union and the United Kingdom Chief Negotiators. This deal paves the way for an orderly withdrawal, a principle that the EU agri-food chain has been repeatedly calling for, thereby providing predictability to operators.

In particular, the EU agri-food chain endorses the revised Political Declaration which confirms the ambition to conclude a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with zero tariffs and quantitative restrictions between the EU and the UK. Despite the welcomed commitment to maintaining customs and regulatory convergence in future, we will not be able to replicate the advantages of the EU customs union and Single Market through an FTA. However, we hope to find a solution that is as close as possible to the current customs and regulatory agreement.

A hard Brexit would have been detrimental for EU and UK farmers, food and drink manufacturers, traders in agri-food commodities as well as consumers. Looking back, in 2017, EU27 agri-food exports to the UK amounted to €41 billion euros while UK exports to the EU reached €17 billion euros. This trade, and the businesses behind it, employ 44 million people across the EU28, reflecting the degree of integration and complexity of the food supply chain.

Copa and Cogeca, CELCAA and FoodDrinkEurope call for the swift ratification of this deal by the EU and the UK before 31 October. Everything must be done to prevent the UK from leaving the EU without an agreement.

On behalf of the European agri-food chain, we will continue to promote a comprehensive and deep FTA between the EU and UK, following the UK's departure from the European Union.

For further information please contact:

Conor Mescall
Senior Manager Public Affairs
c.mescall@fooddrinkeurope.eu

François Guerin
Senior Policy Advisor
Francois.Guerin@copa-cogeca.eu

Ksenija Simovic
Communication Officer
ksenija.simovic@copa-cogeca.eu
Tel: + 32 473 663 071

Pascale Rouhier
CELCAA aisbl Secretary-General
p.rouhier@celcaa.eu
Tel: +32 2 537 37 11