Brussels, July 8 2025

CIUS Response to Commission Announcement regarding import quota on sugar from Ukraine

CIUS represents more than 15 000 sugar-using companies, ranging from artisan, small and medium sized enterprises to multi-nationals. Together our members purchase about 70% of the EU's annual production of sugar and provide direct employment to over 450.000 people in Europe. Products made by our members include fine bakery wares, chocolate, confectionery, soft drinks, canned fruits and jams.

Trade, Not Restrictions, Delivers Competitiveness and Market Stability

The Committee of European Sugar Users (CIUS) welcomes the increase of the tariff rate quota (TRQ) from 20,000 to 100,000 tonnes for sugar imported from Ukraine. CIUS nevertheless regrets that the new cap falls significantly short of the 262,000-tonne safeguard threshold introduced in 2024 under the revised Autonomous Trade Measures (ATM).

According to the Commission's latest balance sheet figures, annual EU sugar imports ranged between 1.3 and 2.3 million tonnes from 2017 to 2024. A cap of 100,000 tonnes severely restricts Ukraine's potential share in EU imports and could negatively impact downstream food and drink manufacturers as market conditions evolve. Agricultural production and commodity markets are inherently cyclical and vulnerable to external shocks. To ensure resilience and fair competition, market participants must be able to respond flexibly to changing conditions—particularly when volatility is amplified by geopolitical tensions, regulatory constraints, or concentrated market structures that risk distorting supply and pricing.

"Had this restriction been in place between 2022 and 2024, the competitiveness and export performance of EU sugar-containing products—such as chocolate, fine bakery wares, confectionery, soft drinks and jams—would have been even more damaged in 2023,"* said **Yury Sharanov, President of CIUS.** *"Access to imports from Ukraine contributes to EU supply resilience and competitiveness in addition to supporting Ukraine's economy during wartime."*

In 2022, the EU faced a substantial sugar shortage caused by a combination of low domestic production and overly restrictive import policies. Over the 2 years between 2022 and 2024, the suspension of TRQs enabled Ukraine to export nearly 1 million tonnes of sugar to the EU—playing a critical role in bridging the supply-demand gap. In parallel, EU producers ramped up output by 2 million tonnes, reaching a total of 16.4 million tonnes in 2024/25. EU sugar prices doubled and remained at historic highs throughout the liberalized period.

Today, the market has rebalanced. Stocks have been replenished, imports have declined, and both EU and Ukrainian producers have scaled back production and increased exports to third countries. Although EU sugar prices have eased, they remain well above pre-war levels and continue to command a premium over world market prices. EU competitiveness has been restored by allowing the market to function properly.

"It was war and import restrictions—not liberalisation—that disrupted the market and harmed EU competitiveness," added **Yury Sharanov** *"EU market actors need flexibility to respond to supply shocks and maintain a competitive food supply chain."*

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Beyond supporting Ukraine's wartime economy, access to Ukrainian sugar strengthens the competitiveness of the EU food and drink industry—one of Europe's largest manufacturing sectors, a major contributor to farm income, a driver of the EU trade surplus, and pillar of the broader EU economy.

CIUS continues to advocate for open and balanced trade policies that benefit both EU and partner countries, particularly in the face of ongoing geopolitical and supply chain challenges.

Further Reading:

For more data and analysis on the benefits of sugar trade liberalisation for both the EU and Ukraine, see pages 5–6 of our 2025 Policy Priorities paper.
*A graphic overview of sugar-containing exports is available on page 2:

https://cius.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CIUS-Policy-Priorities-2025.pdf

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