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CIUS: Potential restrictions on sugar access risk undermining EU exports of sugar-containing products

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.

The European Union has long been a global leader in the export of sugar-containing products, including confectionery, chocolate, baked goods, fruit preserves and soft drinks. However, recent trade data point to mounting pressure on EU export performance in these sectors, reflecting a growing structural competitiveness gap with international producers.

Against this backdrop, CIUS calls on European policymakers to preserve access to competitively priced sugar and to maintain a stable, predictable regulatory framework that supports exports, growth and employment across the food and drink industry.

CIUS expresses serious concern over ongoing policy discussions including recent proposal to suspend Inward Processing arrangements (IPP) for sugar that could further restrict access to sugar for industrial users in the EU, including measures affecting the availability and pricing of sugar on the internal market. Such developments would come at a time when producers of sugar-containing products are already facing elevated input costs, intense global competition and shifting demand patterns.

The EU sugar market remains structurally dependent on access to imported sugar to meet the needs of industrial users across all European regions. While EU sugar producers are able to compete on global markets, sugar-using industries continue to face significantly higher input costs than many of their international competitors. This imbalance directly undermines the export competitiveness of sectors for which sugar is a key raw material.

CIUS President Yury Sharanov stated:

“EU exports of sugar-containing products, from chocolate and biscuits to soft drinks and jams, rely on access to raw materials at globally competitive prices. Additional constraints risk accelerating the decline in export volumes and could increasingly shift production and investment outside the European Union.”

Recent trends suggest that export performance in several sugar-intensive categories has stagnated or declined, pointing to a structural competitiveness challenge. This is particularly concerning given the strategic importance of these sectors for the EU economy, including their contribution to value-added exports and rural supply chains.

Beyond immediate cost impacts, policy uncertainty also risks undermining investment decisions. Sudden or insufficiently justified regulatory changes could weaken confidence in the EU's policy



environment and reduce the attractiveness of Europe as a production base for globally traded food products.

CIUS also stresses that sugar-using industries play a crucial role in supporting European agriculture. A significant share of agricultural raw materials is transformed into higher-value products and exported outside the EU, generating income and employment across the entire food chain.

In light of these considerations, CIUS urges policymakers to:

- safeguard access to sugar at competitive conditions,
- avoid measures that could further distort the level playing field with global competitors,
- and base any policy decisions on robust economic evidence.

Maintaining a competitive environment for sugar-using industries is essential not only to safeguard EU export performance, but also to preserve the resilience and value creation of Europe's broader agri-food chain in an increasingly competitive global economy.