



TomatoEurope opposition to tariff suspension for CN2002903100

TomatoEurope Processors Association¹ would like to raise our serious concerns regarding the tariff quota request for 23.340t of tomato paste (product identification code CN 2002903100) which has recently been published on the EC tariff quota website. We are surprised to see that this possibility is even considered as the European Union tomato processing industry is sound and competitive and has more than enough capacity to produce those volumes of the indicated product.

It must be explained to those who are not familiar with the sector, that the processed tomato sector is an industry based on an annual crop and requires advance planning. Transplanting starts usually in producing countries in March-April and harvest and processing take place in August-September. Orders for special products to be delivered in January of the year “n” need to be placed in January of the year “n-1”, and everyone involved in the business is aware of that and needs to plan their purchases taking that into account.

The product mentioned in the tariff quota request is a super outbreak high-viscosity paste that is usually produced using special high-viscosity varieties of tomato and special equipment (flash cooler). It can be produced without them but it is more complex and expensive. The seeds of these special high-viscosity varieties of tomato are supplied in Europe by a few seeds companies (Heinz and United Genetic), and sometimes they are not so easy to obtain in the market.

The European tomato processing industry can perfectly supply the indicated volumes of the mentioned product, provided, of course, that the orders are placed in due time and that a fair price is paid.

In the very unlikely case that someone might have difficulties to fulfill their needs for tomato products from the European tomato processing industry there are already in place several trade agreements with producing countries that allow importing of tomato products without taxes (Egypt, Ukraine, Chile, etc.).

It is important to take into account, That the European tomato sector is facing a period of very high costs, mainly as a consequence of the Ukrainian war which has had an important impact on all costs (Raw material, energy, packaging, etc.), but also due to the investments in the Green Transitions and the high-costs directly linked to the rules provided by the EU legislation (e.g. European Emissions Trading System). If an unjustified tariff quota is created it could cause great damage to the European tomato processing industry. In summary, we understand that there is no justification at all to open a new tariff quota for tomato products that could have a very negative impact on the European sector, and so we kindly ask you to consider retiring this proposal.

¹ TomatoEurope Processors Association represents the tomato processing industry from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and France, covering around 95% of the European Industry.