

How should the European Green Deal affect EU agri-food trade?

The consumer perspective

11th April 2024 – Meeting of AGRI CDG on International Aspects of Agriculture



OUR MEMBERS = OUR LEGITIMACY



THE EU'S 'TRADE FOOTPRINT'

- EU consumers' food habits have an impact beyond the EU's borders ('trade footprint'), yet few consumers are aware.
- Environmental impacts embodied into EU's imports of food products related mostly to imports of livestock products and feed crops (link with diets).
- As the EU moves towards greater sustainability at home, need to avoid spillover effect and pollution leakage via its agrifood trade.
- Today's agrifood trade policy is insufficiently aligned with the Green Deal.

CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND TRADE

THE EU SHOULD NOT BE MORE PROACTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICIES UNLESS OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHINA OR THE USA DO THE SAME

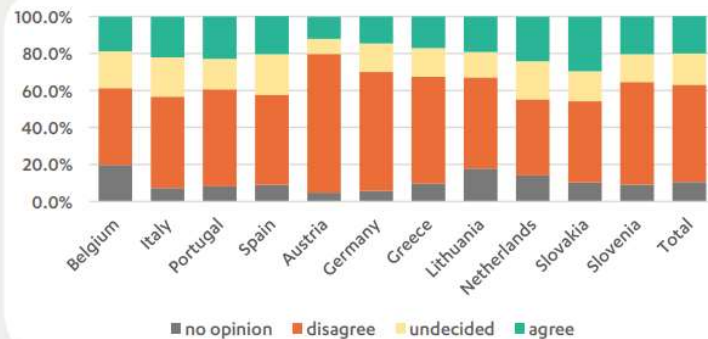


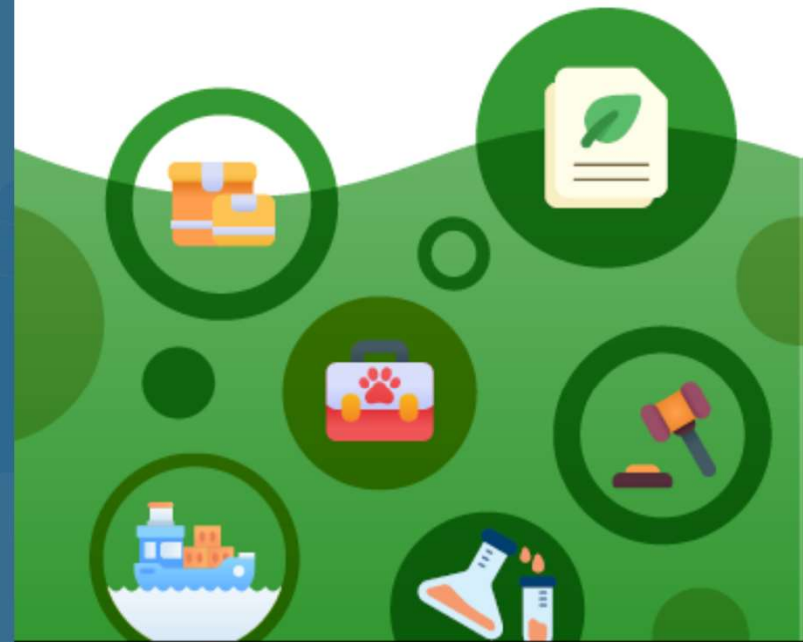
Figure 25: Q10 - Level of agreement with the statement: "The EU should not be more proactive on sustainable food policies unless other countries such as China or the USA do the same" [Base: all respondents]

- **8 in 10** consumers agree that EU rules on animal welfare should apply to imported animal products (BEUC, 2024)
- **84%** of EU citizens believe that EU animal welfare rules should apply to food imports (Eurobarometer, 2023)
- **87%** of EU citizens agree that agricultural products should only enter the EU if they comply with the EU's environmental and animal welfare standards (Eurobarometer, 2022)

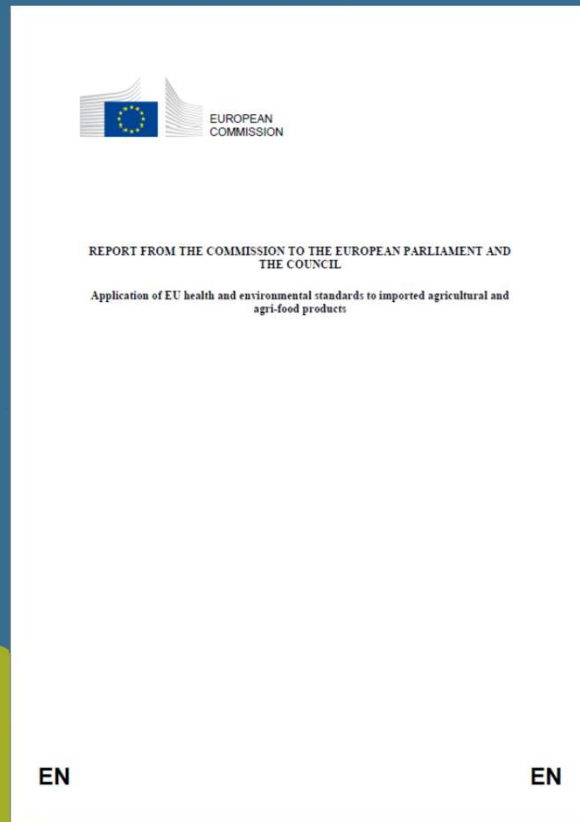
BEUC's RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALIGNING THE EU'S TRADE POLICY WITH ITS SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

February 2024

BEUC recommendations to better align EU trade policy with the Green Deal



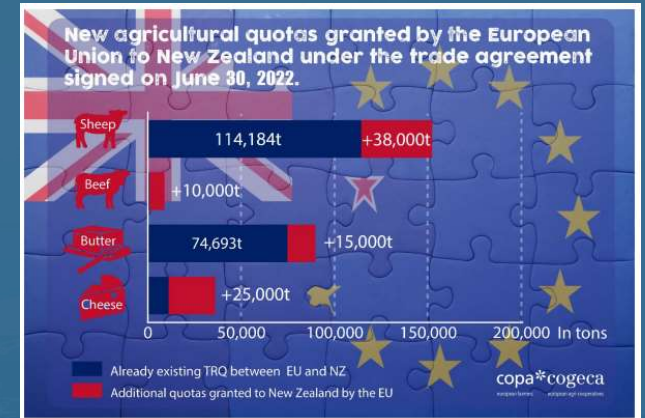
ADOPT IMPORT REQUIREMENTS



- Consumers expect the same rules to apply to imported agrifood products as to those produced in the EU.
- Not a matter of protectionism but about ensuring fairer markets for consumers and farmers alike.
- Import requirements (also known as mirror measures) are possible under WTO rules under certain conditions (e.g. to tackle global environmental concerns or animal welfare issue).
- Examples: deforestation-free products law, ban on antimicrobials used as growth-promoters, due diligence...

MAINSTREAM SUSTAINABILITY THROUGHOUT EU TRADE AGREEMENTS

- Negotiate “sustainability and trade” agreements instead of purely trade agreements.
- Focus preferential access to EU market to more sustainable products.
- Refrain from promoting trade in less sustainable products (how do products the EU imports/exports contribute to sustainable healthy diets?).



MAINTAIN, SET AND ENFORCE AMBITIOUS EU FOOD STANDARDS

- **No compromise with EU standards, e.g. on food safety (example of meat decontamination treatments)**
 - Recent request from Canada to have peroxyacetic acid approved for decontaminating beef carcasses
- **Adoption of new legislation promoting sustainable (incl. healthy) consumption in the EU should not be hampered by trade (e.g. new front-of-pack nutritional label).**
- **Make sure imports comply with EU standards**
 - Need for adequately resourced and effective food controls
 - Need to follow up on results of audit missions

BEUC's RECOMMENDATIONS

- The alignment of the EU's agrifood trade policy with the Green Deal is key for policy coherence.
- Dialogue and cooperation with our trading partners is important but not enough. Food exported into the EU from third countries should meet relevant EU standards.
- To set import requirements where needed, the EU should seize the opportunity of:
 - Planned revision of EU legislation (e.g. on animal welfare)
 - Sustainable Food Systems Framework law with an article requiring the evaluation of existing legislation with a view to adding import requirements where needed



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