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ON INWARD PROCESSING AND INDIA: BEET SUGAR SECTOR WELCOMES IMPROVED POLICY COHERENCE FROM EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The International Confederation of European Beet Growers (CIBE), the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers (CEFS), and the ACP/LDC Sugar Industries Group welcome yesterday's announcement by the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Christophe Hansen "as a first step, to propose a temporary suspension of the sugar inward processing regime to ease pressures" on the EU sugar market. Imports under the regime, which enter the EU at 0 duty, are at their highest in at least five years, and now account for the vast majority of EU sugar imports. They bring EU prices closer to the world market, which is distorted by dumping and subsidies in the major sugar producers and exporters.

In this regard, our associations also welcome the exclusion of sugar of the EU-India trade agreement announced today. India's sugar regime has been condemned by the World Trade Organisation as providing both domestic and export subsidies. The country remains the single most destabilising sugar producer on the world market today. It is logical and welcome to exclude sugar from the deal.

These are concrete steps towards improved policy coherence by the European Commission. We compliment the Commissioner for his decisive action on inward processing in particular. The Commission has recognised the extremely difficult sugar market situation and the need to take action.

We call now for the swift suspension of imports under inward processing, as foreseen in the Common Markets Organisation Regulation.

However, as the Commissioner rightly points out, this is just the "first step": the European institutions must take further action soon to address the unsustainable sugar market situation that sugar beet growers and sugar manufacturers are facing today. Our associations are committed to working with the Commission for a sustainable solution for the EU sugar market.

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