

Beat: Politics

European Union extends trade benefits for Ukraine

For another year

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USPA NEWS - The suspension of import duties, quotas and trade defense measures on Ukrainian exports to the European Union – known as the Autonomous Trade Measures (ATM) – are in place for another year. This strong testament to the EU's unwavering support for Ukraine will help alleviate the difficult situation faced by Ukrainian producers and exporters because of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression.

The EU is phasing out by September 15, 2023, the exceptional and temporary preventive measures adopted on May 2, 2023, on imports of wheat, maize, rapeseed and sunflower seed from Ukraine under the exceptional safeguard of the Autonomous Trade Measures Regulation. The scope of these measures is further reduced from 17 to 6 tariff lines for the 4 products covered. These temporary and targeted measures were adopted due to logistical bottlenecks concerning these products in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, and on the condition that member states do not maintain any restrictive measures. The phase out will allow for significant improvements to be made to the Solidarity Lanes and to address challenges to get Ukrainian grain out of the country for this harvest.

These measures continue to be necessary for a limited period of time given the exceptional circumstances of serious logistical bottlenecks and limited grain storage capacity ahead of the harvest season experienced in five Member States. As agreed, a Joint Coordination Platform has been set up to coordinate the efforts of the Commission, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, as well as Ukraine to improve the flow of trade between the Union and Ukraine, including transit of agricultural products along corridors. Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis is leading this process at political level. A first kick-off meeting of this coordination platform took place at technical level on June 2.

The improvement of Solidarity Lanes will be, therefore, monitored by this export facilitation platform. In case transit of Ukrainian goods is impeded by unduly burdensome requirements in one or several of the five Member States, the Commission will reassess whether the substantive conditions for imposing these preventive measures remain.

These exceptional and temporary measures fully respect the EU's strong commitment to support Ukraine and preserve its capabilities to export its grains which are critical to feed the world and keep food prices down, in the face of the challenges posed by the unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine and its civilians.

In force since June 4, 2022, the ATM to liberalize trade with Ukraine have had a positive effect on Ukraine's trade to the EU. Together with the Solidarity Lanes, the ATM have ensured that trade flows from Ukraine to the EU have been preserved in 2022 despite the disruptions caused by the war and against the general trend of a strong decrease of Ukraine's trade overall.

Unilateral and temporary in nature, the ATM significantly broaden the scope of tariff liberalization under the EU-Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) by suspending all outstanding duties and quotas, as well as duties on anti-dumping and safeguard measures on Ukrainian imports in Ukraine's hour of need. The exceptional and temporary preventive measures on imports of a limited number of products from Ukraine entered into force on May 2, 2023, and were set to last until June 5, 2023.

The measures concern only four agricultural products – wheat, maize, rapeseed and sunflower seed – originating in Ukraine. They exceptional measures are more targeted in terms of scope and will also not apply to sowing seeds. During this period, these products can continue to be released for free circulation in all the Member States of the European Union other than Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The products can continue to circulate in or transit via these five Member States by means of a common customs transit procedure or go to a country or territory outside the EU.

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