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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations

Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the “Agriculture and Fisheries” Council on 27 and 28 October 2025 Joint letter of the Ministers of Agriculture of Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic on efficient safeguard measures for EU trade agreements - <i>Information from Hungary on behalf of Hungary, Romania and Slovakia</i>
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MINISTRY
OF AGRICULTURE

Maroš Šefčovič
Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security

17 October 2025

Christophe Hansen
Commissioner for Agriculture and Food

Subject: *Joint letter of the Ministers of Agriculture of Hungary, Romania and the Slovak Republic on efficient safeguard measures for EU trade agreements*

Dear Commissioner Šefčovič,
Dear Commissioner Hansen,

The European Commission has prepared a proposal for a regulation implementing the bilateral safeguard clause of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement and the EU-Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement for agricultural products (EMPA/ITA), which sets out safeguard measures to protect EU food producers in the event of market disruption caused by the implementation of the agreement. While the European Union has a number of free trade agreements, this proposal only applies to the EU-Mercosur agreement.

The undersigned Member States consider that safeguard measures are necessary for other free trade agreements as well, in particular the one under the relevant provisions of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (Ukraine DCFTA). However, it is important to underline that this letter does not prejudge the final position of the signatory Member States on the above legislative proposal.

We have often taken the view that the Ukraine DCFTA and the EMPA/ITA are in themselves significant enough to cause market crises in the EU internal market, but there is now a very high risk that the two agreements will soon work together to have an impact on the European internal market, which could have unforeseeable consequences for European agriculture and the food industry. The lack of an analysis of the cumulative effects of the EU-Ukraine and EU-Mercosur agreements by the Commission creates considerable uncertainty.

Mercosur countries produce large quantities of agricultural products that are competitive on the world market, with significantly more permissive regulations than the EU's veterinary, phytosanitary and environmental regulations, which represent a major competitive advantage for Mercosur's export products. The same is true for Ukraine.

It is clear that sensitive agricultural sectors need protection, an efficient way of doing so would be to implement the principle of reciprocity in trade agreements. We believe it is important that

the EU also expects its trading partners to meet the standards that EU producers must adhere to.

We see that neither the EMPA/ITA nor the Ukraine DCFTA take sufficient account of the interests of EU farmers and food producers. We therefore consider it important to **put in place efficient safeguards measures not only for the EMPA/ITA but also for the Ukraine DCFTA** and possibly other agreements as well.

We should not forget that a vast majority of goods imported into the EU from Ukraine – as already experienced during the operation of the ATM – tends to end up in the bordering Member States, while in case of the EMPA/ITA due to geographical reasons there are no neighbouring EU Member States. Therefore, we are convinced, that special protective measures are needed for the bordering MSs in case of the Ukraine DCFTA.

A tariff rate quota (TRQ) set at EU level cannot in itself provide sufficient protection for **bordering Member States**, therefore, we call upon the Commission to propose automatically applicable regional safeguards for those Member States by setting individual volume-based triggers (quotas) for the most sensitive agricultural products. The basis of these individual triggers (quotas) should be the normal, pre-war bilateral trade flows between each frontline Member State and Ukraine.

In this regard, it would be also very important to **settle the problem of the maize imported** as the current level of customs duties are zero, due to the relatively high market prices.

Furthermore, we call on the Commission to establish a specific fund to compensate for losses incurred by agricultural producers in the frontline Member States as a result of excessive imports from Ukraine in the future.

Therefore, we urge the Commission to take into account the above mentioned and make a legislative proposal accordingly to create a legal framework, which provides EU farmers in the bordering Member States with appropriate safeguards to be able to handle the negative effects of the revised Ukraine DCFTA agreement.

Yours sincerely,

Mr István Nagy
Minister of Agriculture of Hungary

Mr Florin-Ionut Barbu
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Romania

Mr Richard Takáč
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic