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Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.4.2021)

The Commission is aware of the difficulties of the EU agricultural sector caused inter alia by the United States (US) tariffs related to the civil aircraft disputes as well as by the COVID-19 pandemic. As set out in its recent Communication on a new EU-United States agenda¹, settling these disputes remains a priority for the Commission. This led to an agreement with the US on a suspension of all tariffs linked to the World Trade Organization civil aircraft disputes for four months in order to allow time to find a commonly agreed solution. This is very welcome news for impacted sectors, including wine.

From a financial and budgetary point of view, in previous years, very large amounts of the national support programmes in the wine sector were not used and were therefore lost to the sector. At this time of crisis, it is necessary to maximise the use of these programmes. The prolongation in 2021 of the crisis measures adopted to face the additional tariffs imposed by the US and the COVID-19 pandemic will make it possible to do so, as demonstrated already in 2020.

The budgetary situation in 2021 is very tight and any budget overrun will lead to the application of the financial discipline mechanism. Therefore, the Commission is convinced that the extension of the above-mentioned crisis measures^{2 3 4} remains the right approach for the wine sector to benefit from all the funds allocated to it.

The Commission continues to monitor the situation closely.

¹ Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council: A new EU-US agenda for global change, JOIN (2020) 22 final, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/joint-communication-eu-us-agenda_en.pdf

² Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/78 of 27 January 2021 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/600 derogating from Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/892, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1150, Implementing Regulation (EU) No 615/2014, Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1368 and Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/39 as regards certain measures to address the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (OJ L 29, 28.1.2021, p. 5).

³ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/95 of 28 January 2021 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/592 on temporary exceptional measures derogating from certain provisions of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council to address the market disturbance in the fruit and vegetables and wine sectors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and measures linked to it (OJ L 31, 29.1.2021, p. 198).

⁴ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/374 of 27 January 2021 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/884 derogating in respect of the year 2020 from Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/891 as regards the fruit and vegetables sector and from Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/1149 as regards the wine sector in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, and amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/1149 (OJ L 72, 3.3.2021, p. 3).