



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Ursula von der Leyen
The President

Brussels,

Dear President, dear Prime Ministers,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2023. I am fully aware of the concerns you express as regards the increased imports of certain Ukrainian agricultural products.

In view of our single market and our customs union, a common European approach is needed to address these concerns that arise from an interplay of various factors. Unilateral measures can only play into the hands of the adversaries of Ukraine and should not erode our unwavering support for Ukraine. Indeed, the market access which we have granted to Ukraine and the EU Solidarity Lanes we have opened are crucial for Ukraine's resilience in the face of Russia's war of aggression. Moreover, Ukraine's exports should continue to reach markets around the world, including developing countries. We now need to address specific unintended consequences from the unexpected surge of imports in your countries.

The European Commission has reacted immediately by providing a rapid financial support package of EUR 56.3 million for the most affected farmers, which is already being implemented. We are now preparing to present a second financial support package of EUR 100 million and a 200% co-financing rate, for affected farmers, as part of a common European approach.

I would like to inform you that the European Commission will also take preventive measures pursuant to the safeguard clause included in the autonomous trade measures Regulation. These preventive measures will immediately counteract the deterioration in the situation of Union producers for specific products, i.e. wheat, maize, rapeseed and sunflower seeds. Later today, Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis will organise a meeting with the affected frontline Member States and Ukraine to further discuss this. As requested by Poland, we will also initiate an investigation on other sensitive products.

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Mr. Rumen Radev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria
Mr. Viktor Orbán, Prime Minister of Hungary
Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki, Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
Mr. Nicolae-Ionel Ciucă, Prime Minister of Romania
Mr. Eduard Heger, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic

In parallel with the safeguard investigation, we should work to adopt the pending legislative proposal for the renewal of the autonomous trade measures for another year beyond their current expiry on 5 June 2023. Extending these exceptional measures will strengthen our commercial lifeline to Ukraine.

It should be noted that our extension proposal already includes an expedited safeguard mechanism with stronger provisions, tighter monitoring and reporting to Member States, a lower trigger threshold and a shorter assessment deadline. This responds specifically to the concerns of frontline Member States and stakeholders, including farmers, and will allow us to react even quicker in the future to protect the EU market as necessary.

Beyond the use of safeguards, we will work even more intensely to facilitate the transit of the agricultural goods in question, both to other Member States and third partners, thus alleviating the short-term pressure on the countries adjacent to Ukraine and at the same time helping the liquidity of global agri-food markets. This includes continued work on lowering overall logistics costs, better coordinating transit and enhancing infrastructure in ports, border interconnections and other conduits under the EU Solidarity Lanes, as well as supporting the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

I am convinced that farmers play a vital role in Europe. They provide our food, sustain rural communities, protect the natural environment and preserve our cultural heritage. They deserve our support. Please rest assured that the Commission will continue to support them by giving utmost priority to this sensitive issue.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ursula v. d. L.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ursula von der Leyen