

Europe's food and drink industry calls on EU leaders to resolve trade disputes with the US and strengthen transatlantic cooperation

(Brussels, 18 May 2021) Ahead of the Foreign Affairs Council (Trade) on 20 May 2021, FoodDrinkEurope, Europe's food and drink industry organisation, calls on EU leaders to build on the current positive momentum in the transatlantic relationship to resolve on-going transatlantic disputes with the US, and for both sides to permanently remove retaliatory tariffs on agri-food products.

As an industry unrelated to, but victim of, the long-standing civil aircraft subsidies disputes, and the steel and aluminium dispute, we very much welcome the four-month tariff suspension in the former case. We are also encouraged by yesterday's joint EU-US statement announcing the launch of discussions to address global steel and aluminium excess capacity, and the decision made to temporarily suspend further rebalancing measures

At the same time, we would like to recall that the agri-food chain continues to face considerable uncertainty and costs, as long as these disputes remain unsolved. The risk of further collateral damage on unrelated sectors is looming as we approach July 11 - the end of the four-month tariff suspension in the civil aircraft subsidies disputes. We need to ensure that tariffs do not make an unwelcome return, and to provide clarity to affected companies as soon as possible, considering the length of crossing times and the significant disruptions with maritime logistics, which make last minute planning de-facto impossible.

We trust that the EU and US will deploy all diplomatic efforts necessary to permanently solve ongoing disputes and avoid further damage on unrelated sectors, at a time when our economies are starting to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With this in mind, both sides should continue to prioritise the de-escalation of trade tensions, step up cooperation and agree a clear way forward to strengthen transatlantic trade relations, building on the current positive momentum.

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Note to the editors:

FoodDrinkEurope represents the food and drink manufacturing industry. Made up of 291,000 businesses and 4.8 million employees, the food and drink industry buys 70% of all EU agricultural produce and is Europe's largest manufacturing industry.