

FoodDrinkEurope calls for additional contingency measures, in the case of a “no-deal” Brexit

(Brussels, 05 April 2019) FoodDrinkEurope, the European food and drink industry organisation, has welcomed the publication of contingency measures for its sector in the case of a no-deal Brexit. These initiatives, and the further clarifications provided in yesterday’s press conference with Commissioner Katainen, are important to the food and drink industry, Europe’s largest manufacturing sector in terms of turnover, and to the 4.57 million people it employs, as the threat of a “no-deal” Brexit looms.

FoodDrinkEurope has stressed that the agri-food sector [is particularly vulnerable in the case of a “no-deal Brexit”](#), and reiterates that either way, whether it is a “soft” or “hard” Brexit, it will be disruptive to the market. The contingency measures as announced by the European Commission are therefore welcomed.

The UK imports €33 billion worth of food and drink products every year from the European Union; should the UK leave both the Single Market and the Customs Union, there will be significant difficulties in continuing this trade.

The European Commission’s contingency measures provide some certainty and clarity for our businesses; we note for example, the flexibility provided by the suggestion to allow for the exhaustion of stock already on the market before the date of departure, and proposals highlighted by Vice President Katainen for checks on product safety to be carried out in the least disruptive manner, away from the land border on the island of Ireland if possible.

FoodDrinkEurope is mindful that for many companies, in particular SMEs, this will be the first time they do business with a “third country”, a move which requires considerable financial and human resources.

Whilst we welcome this latest approach by the European Commission in preparing for “no-deal Brexit”, further [contingency measures](#) may be necessary to avoid the potential devastating economic disruption, including the loss of jobs, that a “no-deal Brexit” may entail. Should the UK crash out of the EU, we look forward to engaging with the Commission and relevant national authorities to ensure that these negative consequences can be mitigated as much as possible.

Mella Frewen, FoodDrinkEurope Director General, stated: *“We deeply regret that a ‘no-deal Brexit’ is now described as the ‘likely scenario’ and we are determined to help our businesses best prepare for this unfortunate potential outcome. We look forward to continued cooperation with the European Commission in order to ensure that food and drink companies are as prepared as possible for future trade with the UK as a third country.”*

-ENDS-

Note to the editors:

FoodDrinkEurope is the organisation of Europe’s food and drink industry, the largest manufacturing sector and leading employer in the EU and a key contributor to its economy (294,000 companies, 99% SMEs, 4.6 million employees.)