**PRESS RELEASE**

**FruitVegetablesEUROPE calls on the European Commission to act as regard the non-compliance and non-implementation of the measures provided for in the EU-Morocco Agreement”.**

***"THE EU-MOROCCO AGREEMENT IS KILLING THE EU TOMATO SECTOR”.***

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* **The requests of the EU Tomato producers are clear and fair, they are only asking for closely monitoring the situation and take the necessary measures to avoid the collapse of the European tomato market.**
* **With its inaction and passivity the European Commission is actively contributing to the death of the EU tomato sector.**
* **European agriculture cannot be a hostage of the EU's migration policy.**

*(Brussels, 17th June 2021)*. Today, **FruitVegetablesEUROPE (EUCOFEL), AOPn Tomate de France, FEPEX and DPA** sent a joint letter to President Von der Leyen and Commissioners Dombrovskis (TRADE), Kyriakides (SANTE) and Wojciechowski (AGRI) to express deep concern regarding the damaging impact of the EU-Morocco Agreement on the EU Tomato market.

For several years now, FruitVegetablesEUROPE and its members have being voicing the **devastating impact of the EU-Morocco Agreement** on the EU tomato market, due to the non-compliance and non-implementation of the measures provided for in the Agreement. There are real concerns regarding the **calculation method for the import value for Moroccan tomatoes, the need to** **conduct** **consultations with the Moroccan authorities, as well as the need to adapt the quota after the BREXIT and the labelling and control of the tomatoes grown in Western Sahara.** Despite the warnings, the situation is getting worse. This dramatic situation is putting in danger the sustainability of the complete EU tomato production system.

FruitVegetablesEUROPE remains of the opinion that there is an urgent need to act to protect the European fruit and vegetables sector, and particularly the EU Tomato sector, from competition caused by 3rd countries, that has been caused by not following legislation and trade agreements.

**In the letter, FruitVegetablesEUROPE (EUCOFEL), AOPn Tomate de France, FEPEX and DPA indicated that the action of the Commission is absolutely needed as regard the non-compliance and non-implementation of the measures provided for in the EU-Morocco Agreement**.

Therefore, FruitVegetablesEUROPE called upon the European Commission:

* **To amend the calculation method used to calculate the import value of tomatoes from Morocco, using only prices for “round tomatoes”.**
* **To properly apply the Cooperation clause (Art. 4) and the Safeguard measure (Art. 7) in order to have an effective implementation of the Agreement.**
* **To hold consultations with the Moroccan authorities to ensure that the objectives provided for by the Protocol are achieved.**
* **To monitoring the payment of the Ad valorem rights.**
* **To specify, standardize and audit** **the way of collecting and calculating the price of Moroccan tomatoes in the EU, in order that the prices of the standard import value reported by the Member States accurately reflect the reality of the EU markets.**
* **To adapt the quota allowed by the EU to Morocco following the UK’s withdrawal from the EU.**
* **To monitoring the Tomato imports from Western Sahara by isotope analyses and request a special labelling to avoid origin fraud.**

- FruitVegetablesEUROPE Secretary General, ***Alba Ridao-Bouloumié***, declared: “The COVID-19 pandemic showed that safeguarding access to the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables produced in the EU must be a priority for Europeans consumers and therefore for the European Commission. To cope with future emergencies, a resilient and robust fruit and vegetable sector must be in place. With its inaction and passivity the European Commission is actively contributing to the death of the EU tomato sector. European agriculture cannot be a hostage of the EU's migration policy”.

- AOPn Tomate de France president and FruitVegetablesEUROPE's Vicepresident, ***Laurent Bergé***, highlighted: “there is a need to adapt the quota after the BREXIT. The quota for EU27 remained at 285,000 t despite the withdraw of the United Kingdom from the EU. Furthermore, the United Kingdom has granted Morocco with a quota of 47,510 t. Despite this, the Commission has not corrected the quota and has not deducted the quota granted by the United Kingdom to Morocco. We believe that the new quota should have been 237,490 t and not 285,000 t and consequently we call for a correction.

- FEPEX director general, **José Maria Pozancos** indicated: “The EU-Morocco Agreement clearly states that the concessions included in it, both the 285,000T quota rate and the reduction in the Entry Price, aim to maintain traditional trends and avoid market disruptions. Nevertheless, that is not being respected, since imports of Moroccan tomatoes into the EU market have increased constantly and significantly in recent years (The traditional level was 332,231 t - average 2009-2011). Proof of that is that Morocco exported to the EU-28: 518,190 t in 2020. So the cooperation clause is not applied either”.

- DPA, **Wim Rodenburg** signalled: “The origin of tomatoes grown in Western Sahara should be controlled by the EU and a special labelling should established to distinguish the products coming from Morocco and from the Western Sahara. Control can be done by e.g. isotope analyses, there is a strict legislation in the EU that orders that labelling of origin should be done properly and if not, this is fraud what we strongly condemn”.

***FruitVegetablesEUROPE the voice of the European Fruit and Vegetables sector.***

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