

PRESS RELEASE – 27 January 2022

EU CHALLENGES EGYPTIAN IMPORT RESTRICTIONS AT THE WTO

27 January 2022, Brussels – The EU ceramic industry welcomes the EU Commission's decision to request dispute settlement consultation at the WTO with Egypt with regard to its import registration system, which since 2016 is illegally excluding certain EU ceramic tiles exporters from the Egyptian market.

On 26 January 2022, the European Union (EU) has formally requested dispute settlement consultations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) with Egypt with regard to its import registration requirements.

Since 2016, EU exporters in 29 categories of goods are required to register with Egyptian authorities in order to export to the country. However, the registration system is unpredictable and arbitrary, with many companies being denied the authorisation without sufficient justification.

EU exporters of ceramic tiles are particularly affected by this barrier: many companies from Italy and Spain are still denied registration after having submitted their application in 2016. Despite multiple attempts to solve this issue through institutional channels as well as Egyptian importers, the situation has not improved and after more than five years, several EU ceramic tiles exporters continue to be unduly excluded from the Egyptian market.

Cerame-Unie and its sectorial branch CET (European Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers' Federation) welcome the decision of the European Commission to move forward and request dispute settlement consultations at the WTO. The EU industry calls on the Commission to ensure that the pending applications of EU exporters are immediately unblocked and that the registration process becomes fair and predictable for all applicants.

The European ceramic industry covers a wide range of products including abrasives, bricks & roof tiles, clay pipes, wall & floor tiles, refractories, sanitaryware, table- & ornamentalware, technical ceramics, expanded clay and flower pots. The industry generates over 200,000 direct jobs and a production value of €31 billion in the EU.

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