

PRESS RELEASE – 08 November 2021

PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF EU TRADE AGREEMENTS

08 November 2021, Brussels – The ceramic industry welcomes the publication of the Commission’s Report on implementation and enforcement of EU Trade Agreements. Cerame-Unie remains in close contact with the Commission to actively address the concerns of EU ceramic exporters and ensure that trade barriers are solved in the most effective and timely manner.

Cerame-Unie welcomes the publication of the Commission’s first “[Report on Implementation and Enforcement of EU Trade Agreements](#)”, which provides a detailed analysis on the Commission’s actions to ensure compliance with trade rules by the EU trading partners.

In the area of barriers to trade, the Report acknowledges that the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated protectionist trends in some third countries. The EU ceramic industry is particularly affected by Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs), which account for 17% of the total 462 trade and investment barriers registered in 2020. In this context, the work carried out by the Commission to identify and remove barriers has been very important to meet the concerns of EU businesses.

With two complaints already filed in 2020, the ceramic industry is an active user of the new Single Entry Point (SEP) set up by the Commission to report new barriers to trade. As documented in the Report, Cerame-Unie has used the SEP to address an import ban on ceramic tiles in Egypt, which was eventually removed in March 2021. The industry has continued to use this tool in 2021.

The report also makes reference to the Trade Barrier Regulation (TBR) investigation on the Saudi Quality Mark, initiated in June 2020 following the complaint lodged by the Union industry. In light of the multiple WTO violations found in the final TBR report, Cerame-Unie calls on the Commission to ensure that international trade law is correctly enforced in the context of the Saudi Quality Mark.

Despite the improvements in 2020, considerable obstacles to a fair and rules-based access to third markets have continued to affect EU exporters in 2021. The worldwide increasing protectionist trends leading to new tariff and non-tariff barriers for EU ceramic producers emphasize the need to improve the predictability of the EU market access instruments.

The mandatory export license scheme in Egypt is an example of a long standing barrier that since 2016 is preventing several EU ceramic tiles producers to export to Egypt.

Cerame-Unie remains in close contact with the Commission to actively address the concerns of our companies and ensure that problems with trading partners are solved in the most effective and timely manner.

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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