EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR NO CONCESSIONS ON SUGAR IN EU-INDIA TRADE TALKS

On 5 July 2022 the European Parliament plenary adopted its report on EU-India future trade and investment cooperation.

In the light of the WTO's ruling condemning India's sugar subsidies, the European Parliament called for no EU concessions on sugar in the ongoing trade negotiations with India. The European Parliament also called for an immediate suspension of the WTO quota that provides India with 10,000 tonnes-worth of preferential access to the EU sugar market annually.

Despite the WTO's ruling, the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry has already announced that it has no intention to eliminate its sugar subsidies.

CEFS Director General Marie-Christine Ribera said: *"Our sector has long called for the elimination of trade-distorting subsidies and strongly opposes any market access where no level playing field exists. We call on the European Commission to take the European Parliament's position into account in the EU-India talks and to ensure that no more Indian sugar enters the EU market until the offending measures are removed."*

In its report the European Parliament also noted that Indian sugar has long been produced under substandard social and environmental conditions. Conditions of forced labour, abuse of migrant children and non-payment of wages at the end of the season have been reported.

CIBE Director Elisabeth Lacoste said: *"The EU is the global leader in driving the global green and sustainable transition. The WTO recognises members' right to implement measures to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as the protection of human health and safety, or protection of the environment if these are non-arbitrary, non-discriminatory or trade restricting. Such standards can enhance trade and sustainable development. Therefore, the EU beet sugar sector supports all measures to avoid importing sugar from India or from any third country produced under substandard social and environmental conditions."*