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## PRESS STATEMENT

### VISION FOR AGRICULTURE & FOOD FAILS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PRIMARY FOOD PROCESSING

The European Commission's Communication, *A Vision for Agriculture and Food: Shaping Together an Attractive Farming and Agri-Food Sector for Future Generations*, once again neglects the crucial role of primary food processors, including beet sugar manufacturers, in ensuring food security, sustainability, and competitiveness.

Every year primary food processors transform 220 million tonnes of agricultural raw materials (including 100 million tonnes of sugar beets) into essential ingredients for food, feed, and bio-based applications. They are the indispensable link between farmers and downstream distribution, making agricultural raw materials suitable for consumption and storage, and serving as a pillar of the EU's food security. Industries such as beet sugar manufacturing have unique challenges, distinct from farming: we are capital- and energy-intensive, and rely on skilled industrial workers. Despite this, the Commission's Communication dedicates just one vague paragraph to the food industry and makes no mention of primary food processors.

The Vision for Agriculture & Food is not worth of the name: the food industry is treated as an afterthought rather than a mutually-dependent partner of farmers.

CEFS Director General Marie-Christine Ribera said: "The Vision confirms the European Commission's disregard for the unique challenges faced by primary food processors. We call for an Action Plan for the EU's Food & Drink Industry, just as for other industrial sectors, that will recommend concrete policy changes to

 Avenue de Tervuren 268, B-1150, Brussels, Belgium

## CONTACT

European Association of Sugar Manufacturers  
Marie-Christine Ribera  
Director General  
+32 2 762 07 60  
[mariechristine.ribera@cefs.org](mailto:mariechristine.ribera@cefs.org)



support the resilience and competitiveness of our sectors. In the meantime, the EU Primary Food Processors association (PFP) should be granted an observer seat on the new European Board for Agriculture & Food. Currently, FoodDrinkEurope is the only representative of the EU's food and drink sector in the expert group."

 Avenue de Tervuren 268, B-1150, Brussels, Belgium

 [www.cefs.org](http://www.cefs.org)

 [@SugarEurope](https://twitter.com/SugarEurope)

 +32 2 762 07 60

**Contact:**

For press inquiries to CEFS, please contact Catherine Jaworowska, Communications & Social Affairs Officer, at

E: [catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org](mailto:catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org)

T: +32 2 762 07 60

For more information on the EU beet sugar industry, please consult:

European Sugar Statistics Report for the marketing year 2021/22

The EU Sugar Industry Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2020-21

**About CEFS:**

CEFS, the European Association of Sugar Manufacturers, is an international non-profit organisation and a recognised interlocutor for the EU Institutions since 1953, sharing knowledge and technical expertise on sugar.

CEFS' membership is composed of sugar-producing companies in the EU and Switzerland.

Find out more about CEFS and the EU beet sugar industry here.