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## **EU-AUSTRALIA DEAL: CUMULATIVE TRADE CONCESSIONS THREATEN TO PUSH THE EU BEET SUGAR SECTOR OVER THE BRINK**

As part of the EU-Australia trade deal concluded today, the European Commission has announced a 35,000-tonne duty-free raw sugar quota for Australia. While less than the 80,000 tonnes requested by Australia, it comes on top of a huge volume of cumulative concessions that have increased third country access to the EU sugar market to unsustainable levels.

With the recent 180,000-tonne quota for Brazil and the 100,000-tonne quota for Ukraine, today's deal will bring the total duty-free import availability to 1.13 million tonnes (excluding duty-free, quota free access for the African, Caribbean & Pacific and Least Developed Countries), even as EU sugar consumption continues to decline. If we include reduced-duty quotas this access rises close to 1.7 million tonnes.

CIBE President Marcel Jehaes said: "The industry's capacity to absorb these concessions has reached a hard limit. Since 2017 21 factories have ceased operations, following successive crises. We are now on the precipice of another: prices have fallen 40% drop over the past two years, pushing sugar manufacturers and beet growers to the brink. European sugar beet growers have had enough of paying the price for all the FTAs concluded."

CEFS President Giovanni Tamburini said: "This new concession comes as the industry braces for yet another crisis. The conflict in Iran has forced a vertical spike in energy and fertiliser costs, with EU natural gas futures up 93% and urea futures up 63% this year."

Agriculture Commissioner Christophe Hansen has shown he is willing to act to suspend inward processing, which is heaping additional pressure on the EU market. But fierce lobbying from sugar users to maintain and increase their exorbitant access to third country sugar risks delaying the process. Sugar manufacturers and beet growers stress there is no more time to spare.

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## Contact CEFS

Catherine Jaworowska  
Communications & Social Affairs Officer  
[catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org](mailto:catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org)  
+32 2 762 07 60

## Contact CIBE

Elisabeth Lacoste  
Director  
[elisabeth.lacoste@cibe-europe.eu](mailto:elisabeth.lacoste@cibe-europe.eu)  
+32 2 50 46 091