

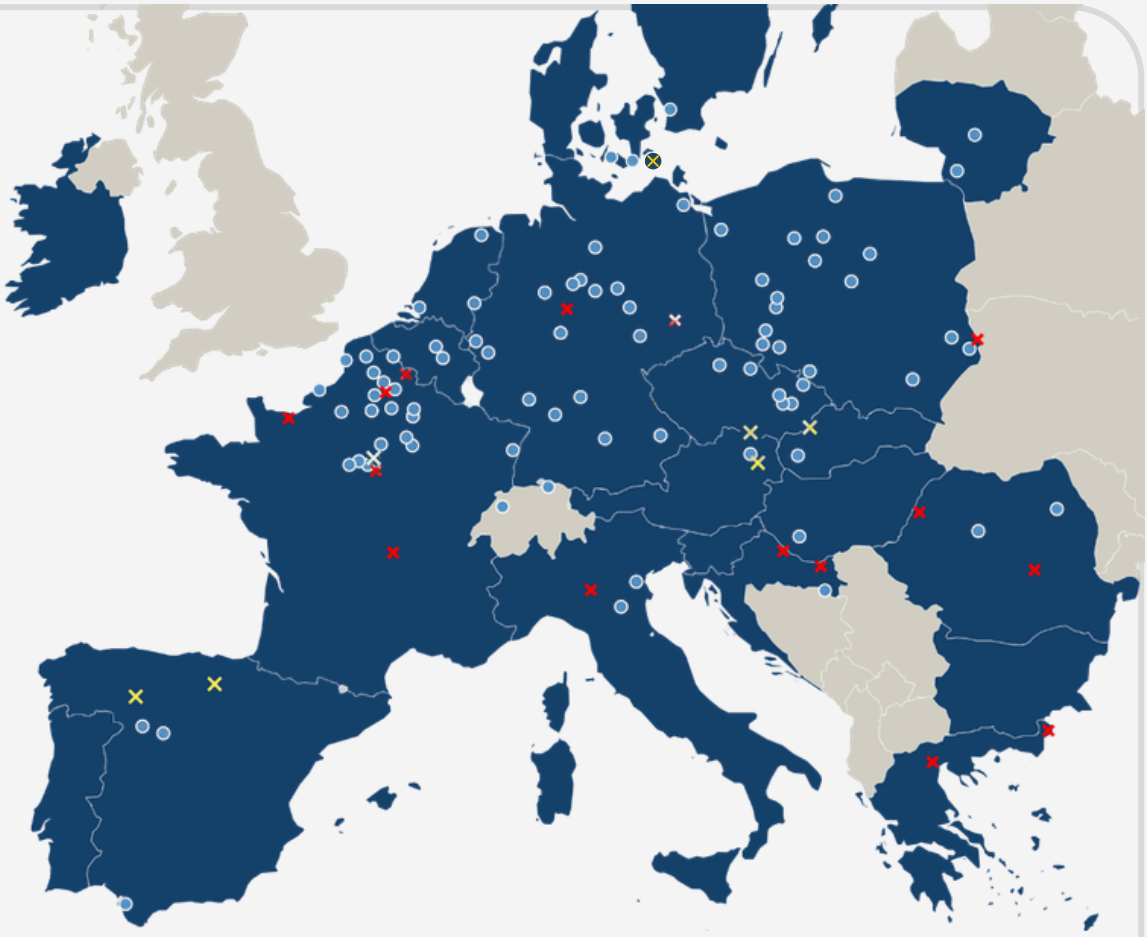
EU–THAILAND: EUROPE CAN'T AFFORD TO TRADE AWAY ITS SUGAR SECTOR

1 EUROPEAN FACTORIES ARE CLOSING WHILE THAI FACTORIES ARE EXPANDING

22
EU factory closures
Since the abolition of quotas in 2017

12
New Thai factories approved
Under Thailand's 2015–2026 Cane and Sugar Strategy

22
beet sugar factories have closed and
4000
jobs have been lost since the end of quotas in September 2017.



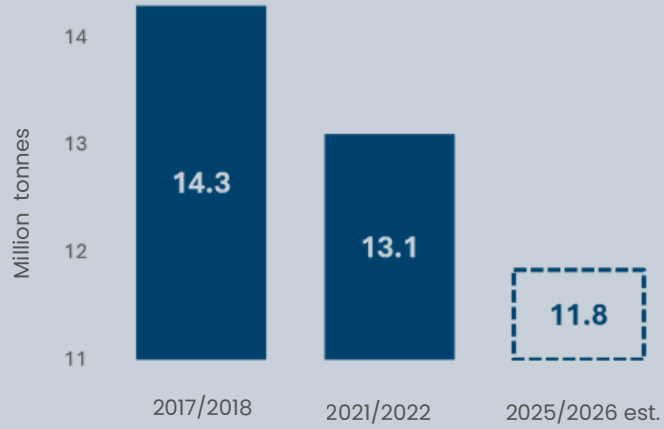
Legend
X = latest closure announcements since 2025
X = other closures since 2017

2 THE EU MARKET IS SHRINKING, BUT ACCESS GRANTED TO THIRD PARTNERS KEEPS GROWING

-2.5 million tonnes

EU sugar consumption decline

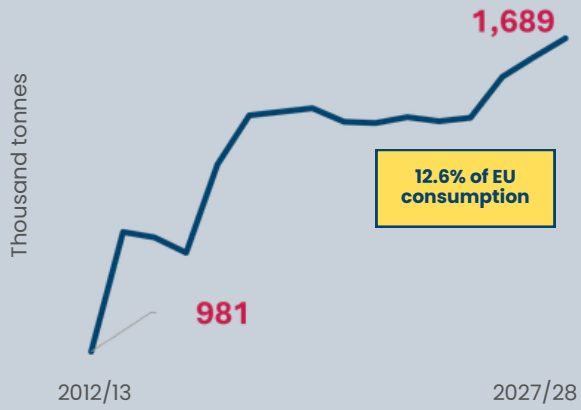
Between 2017/2018 and 2025/2026 (est)



+1.69 million tonnes

Duty-free and reduced-duty access granted

Projected for 2027/28 (excl. ACP/LDC/quota-free)



3 THERE IS NO LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

	EU	Thailand
Environment	Stringent environmental requirements and large investments in compliance with EU standards	More than 130 active substances banned in the EU in sugar beet cultivation permitted for use in sugar cane cultivation
Labour	High social and labour standards	Documented cases of labour exploitation and child labour
Market framework	Liberalised market with no EU sugar policy and without price interventions	Government-administered sugarcane pricing system and financial support through the Cane and Sugar Fund and green cane payments

As EU sugar factories close, and quality jobs are lost, Thailand continues to expand its production capacity and strengthen its position as the second biggest global exporter. European beet growers and sugar producers face stringent environmental and social requirements, while competing with imports produced to lower standards.

Sugar should be excluded from the EU–Thailand FTA. Europe's sugar industry cannot absorb further trade concessions.