

Statements on Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products and (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union ⁽¹⁾

(2021/C 488/03)

Joint statement by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on proactive engagement at multilateral level concerning the application of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural products

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission recognise the need to seek greater coherence between health and environmental standards that apply to agricultural products in the European Union and those that apply to imported agricultural products, in conformity with international trade rules. In order to tackle sustainable development issues, especially climate change and biodiversity loss, which are issues of global concern, and to match Citizens' expectations for higher quality and more sustainable foods the European Union has continually raised these standards for many years. The European Green Deal and its sectoral strategies, including the Commission communication 'Farm to Fork strategy', strive to achieve this goal, and will result in a further raising of these standards applied within the EU, including, where relevant, for imported products.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission recognise the need to engage proactively at the multilateral level in increasing the ambition on international environmental objectives when enforcing and improving international trade rules. As stated in the Commission Trade Policy Review Communication, it is also appropriate for the European Union, under certain circumstances as defined by WTO rules, to require that imported agricultural products comply with certain production requirements so as to ensure the effectiveness of the health, animal welfare and environmental standards that apply to agricultural products in the European Union and to contribute to the full delivery of the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy communications. Given the importance of its market in international trade, the European Union can use its leverage capacity to raise health and environmental standards globally and thus contribute to achieving international environmental objectives such as those of the Paris Agreement.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission welcome the broader approach put forward in the Trade Policy Review, regarding the need for more engagement at the multilateral level to address key issues, such as strategic stocks, in particular because food is an essential good. Improving global food security implies reducing instability in agricultural markets by more cooperation at multilateral level going beyond reduction of market distortions, which is a necessary but not sufficient factor in stabilising international markets.

Joint statement by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the CMO provisions related to the EU sugar sector

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission recognise the difficulties faced by the sugar sector after the abolition of the sugar quotas in October 2017, characterised by instability on international markets, stagnating consumption and declining sugar beet and sugar production. This situation is source of concerns for the EU sugar sector.

The current state of the sector and its adaptation strategies will be assessed thoroughly within the framework of a study to be delivered in autumn 2021. The study will analyse the European and national policy instruments available for the sugar sector, the respective roles of the private sector and of the public institutions in responding to the major risks affecting the sector and will identify possible strategies to improve the resilience of the European sugar sector.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission will consider any appropriate future policy developments in light of the key findings and conclusions made in the context of this study. Such future policy developments could encompass any relevant regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives related to market and crisis management tools, market transparency in the sugar supply chain, contractual relations between growers and sugar producers, international trade and the evolution of the bioeconomy.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 262.

Joint statement by the European Parliament and the Council concerning the application of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural products

The European Parliament and the Council invite the Commission to present, at the latest in June 2022, a report containing an assessment of the rationale and legal feasibility of applying EU health and environmental standards (including animal welfare standards as well as processes and production methods) to imported agricultural and agri-food products as well as identifying the concrete initiatives to ensure better consistency in their application, in conformity with WTO rules. That report should cover all relevant public policy areas including – but not limited to – the Common Agricultural Policy, the Health and Food Safety Policy, the environmental policy and the Common Commercial Policy.

Commission statement on the review of import tolerances and Codex Maximum Residue Limits (MRL)

The Commission will continue to ensure that, following a thorough assessment of the scientific information available for active substances either in the context of the procedures under Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾ or the procedures under Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽³⁾ and in conformity with WTO rules, import tolerances and Codex Maximum Residue Limits (CXLs) are assessed and reviewed for active substances that are not, or are no longer, approved in the EU, so that any residues in food or feed do not present any risk for consumers. In addition to health and good agricultural practice aspects currently considered, the Commission will also take into account environmental concerns of a global nature in conformity with WTO rules when assessing import tolerance applications or when reviewing import tolerances for active substances no longer approved in the EU. The presentation by the Commission of the proposal for a legislative framework for sustainable food systems will be a crucial additional step towards the full achievement of this ambition, in coherence with the Green Deal objectives.

Commission statement on wine and aromatised wine products nutrition and ingredients labelling

The Commission considers that products containing 1,2 % and less by volume of alcohol should continue to be regulated by the FIC Regulation and reserves its right to revert to the legal framework for wine labelling within the upcoming initiative for the labelling of all alcoholic beverages under the EU Beating Cancer Plan.

The Commission also considers that the present compromise on wine and aromatised wine products labelling as regards the list of ingredients and nutrition declaration cannot be seen as creating a precedent for future legislative proposal and negotiation and reserves its rights to align the labelling requirements for all wines to the EU Beating Cancer Plan.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1107/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market and repealing Council Directives 79/117/EEC and 91/414/EEC (OJ L 309, 24.11.2009, p. 1).

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EC) No 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC (OJ L 70, 16.3.2005, p. 1).