

Mr Phil Hogan
Commissioner of Trade
European Commission

Brussels, 27 February 2020

Subject: Safeguard measures on rice imports from Cambodia

Dear Commissioner Hogan, Caro Phil,

On February 2018, the Italian government, supported by all other EU rice growing Member States (Spain, France, Portugal, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria), tabled a request calling for the adoption of safeguard measures concerning “Indica” rice originating from Cambodia, pursuant to Article 22 of Regulation (EU) No 978/2012.

The in depth analysis launched by the European Commission, determined that imports of “Indica” rice from Cambodia notably increased in the previous five seasons and the prices were substantially lower than those on the EU market. This surge in low-price imports caused serious economic damages to EU rice producers to the extent that their market share in the EU dropped from 61% to 39%. In this regard, on 18 January 2019 the Commission reinstated the normal customs duty on “Indica” rice.

In light of these considerations and due to the fact that the safeguard measures will expire in January 2022, a constant monitoring of the market developments on rice coming from Cambodia should be implemented by the European Commission in order to be able to rapidly undertake all the measures required to preserve the sustainability of this production, that has a strategic role for the EU agri-food sector, in social, economic and environmental terms.

Given the ever-changing role of some of the EU trading partners in the Mainland Southeast Asia, in the event of persisting market difficulties by European rice producers in the coming months, we ask for your commitment to promptly implement all the necessary procedures to extend the safeguard measures not only from a temporal point of view, but also to other types of rice, and in particular Japonica rice, which are currently suffering serious economic damage due to the continuous increase in low-price imports from Cambodia.

We trust that you will take into due consideration our request and look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

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