

# Sugar sector: Council agrees on the reimbursement of excess levies between 1999 and 2001

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On 19 February 2018 the Council decided on a recalculation of the sugar production levies for the years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. The objective of the adopted regulation is to comply with a judgment of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) from February 2017, which ruled that the production levies for the sugar sector between 1999 and 2001 had been wrongly calculated, resulting in sugar producers being over-charged.

I am pleased to announce that today's decision enables us to put right the wrongs of the past and ensure that those sugar producers who were over-charged are fully refunded.

*Rumen Porodzanov, Minister of agriculture, food and forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria and President of the Council*

In order to comply with the ECJ judgment, the regulation adopted by the Council provides for sugar producers and beet growers to be reimbursed for the excess sums unduly paid between 1999 and 2001.

The overall impact to the EU budget has been calculated at €195.3 million, out of which €93.1 million for the levies and €102.2 million for the estimated interest costs.

The common market organisation (CMO) in the sugar sector was set up in 1968 with the aim of ensuring a fair income for EU producers and self supply of the EU market, and since then it has been periodically reviewed. In order to support European growers and processors, the sugar sector was originally subject to price support and production quotas, that were ended on 30 September 2017.

Sugar levies were inherently linked to the sugar quota regime. Under the CMO rules, producers overshooting their quota had to pay a surplus levy on such quantities. These levies were then paid into the EU budget.

The adopted regulation will enter into force on the day following its

publication and shall apply from:

- 13 October 2000, as regards the 1999/2000 marketing year
- 12 October 2001, as regards the 2000/2001 marketing year

[Visit the meeting page](#) [Download as pdf](#)

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## **CE saddened by passing of Mr Zhang Junsheng**

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (February 19) was saddened to learn of the passing of former deputy director of the Hong Kong branch of Xinhua News Agency, Mr Zhang Junsheng.

“Mr Zhang had worked in Hong Kong for a long period of time and was actively involved in the work for Hong Kong’s return to the Motherland, contributing a lot to the preparation for the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. With deep attachment to Hong Kong, he had been concerned about the affairs of the city even after he had left Hong Kong. I am saddened by his passing and extend my deepest condolences to his family,” Mrs Lam said.

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## **Press release: Foreign Secretary calls for international effort to tackle wildlife crime**

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson visited the Metropolitan Police Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) facility in London today (Monday 19 February) to see illegally traded wildlife products seized by the Met Police before they could be sold on the black market in the UK.

Many of the cases the WCU deals with involve cross-border smuggling and require police collaboration with international agencies, underlining the need for greater international cooperation to tackle the illegal wildlife trade.

The Foreign Secretary saw items seized in successful WCU operations. This includes the recent Abbas Allawi case, where Met Police raided a Watford property using trained search dogs and found wildlife goods with a street value of over £1 million stashed in his attic.

The Foreign Secretary was shown items including seven rhino horns weighing over 16kg, and dozens of raw ivory tusks and carved ivory specimens as well as animal trophies including a stuffed lion's head and tiger skins. He heard how there is online demand for primates, including severed monkey hands turned into trinkets and monkey skulls.

During the visit the Foreign Secretary said:

When we think of the illegal wildlife trade, the slaughter of elephants, rhinos and other species teetering on the brink of extinction, we think of Africa, Asia and distant countries where some think this acceptable. We rarely associate this crime with our own shores. To say I was angry to see the haul of ivory, rhino horns, animal furs and other items in the gross menagerie of seized illegal animal products in London is an understatement.

This is not just a crime taking place overseas. Criminal lowlifes operate right here in the UK and the Met Police and other forces are working to stop them in their tracks. Criminal gangs trafficking wildlife across UK borders will not be permitted to operate with impunity, but this requires a global effort, tackling both the supply and demand of this odious trade.

We will not let up our efforts to ensure that future generations can share our planet with rhinos and elephants and that the criminals who seek to harm them face justice.

The Foreign Secretary also learned about a new technique for taking fingerprints from ivory. The technique was tested on ivory from the WCU facility from previous seizures, and it increases the chances of building a legal case against perpetrators.

This follows on from the Foreign Secretary's recent visit to Asia where he viewed illegally trafficked ivory and pangolin scales seized by Thai customs.

In October the UK will host an international conference on the illegal wildlife trade, bringing together global leaders to work to end wildlife crime.

## **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
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## [News story: UK agrees sale of HMS Ocean to Brazil](#)

Sold to the Brazilian Navy for around £84M, the profit generated from the sale will be reinvested in defence at a time when the Royal Navy is being strengthened with two types of brand new frigates and two huge aircraft carriers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth, which will eventually take on the role as the nation's new flagship, recently set sail from the port of Gibraltar carrying two Chinooks and four Merlin helicopters as she readies for helicopter trials at sea.

Throughout HMS Ocean's impressive 20 years since entering service in 1998, she has covered more than 450,000 nautical miles. The long-planned decision to take her out of service in 2018, as she reaches the end of her planned service life, was confirmed in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015.

Her military record spans from Operation Palliser during the Sierra Leone civil war to Operation Ellamy as part of an international coalition in Libya in 2011.

Most recently, HMS Ocean demonstrated her humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities when she bolstered the hurricane relief effort on Operation Ruman in the Caribbean last summer. It is fitting that one of her final operations mirrored that of her first, when in early 1999 she was deployed at short notice to render assistance to Honduras and Nicaragua in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

The sale of HMS Ocean was managed by the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA), which is part of the MOD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support. The Authority provides an efficient sale and disposal services to the armed forces as well as customers in the UK and overseas.

Clive Walker, Head of DESA, said:

We have a proven track record of supplying surplus defence equipment on a government to government basis. The successful sale of HMS Ocean to the Brazilian Navy will provide a financial return to the UK which will now be reinvested in defence.

HMS Ocean will decommission from the Royal Navy in March, with plans for the Brazilian Navy to take possession of the ship in June 2018. Modifications to the ship will be made by UK companies Babcock and BAE Systems in the meantime, with this work funded by Brazil.

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## [News story: Technical consultation on trade secrets](#)

A [technical consultation on the Trade Secrets Directive](#) has launched. We are seeking views on the draft Regulations which will bring the Directive into UK law.

A trade secret is a form of confidential business information that can give a business a competitive edge in the market. The government believes it is important businesses are able to protect their trade secrets. This is because they can be of great commercial value.

The EU Trade Secrets Directive was adopted on 8 June 2016 and came into force on 5 July 2016. It sets out minimum standards for measures, procedures and remedies that should be available in the unlawful acquisition, use or disclosure of trade secrets. It includes a definition of a trade secret and provisions for protecting confidential information during legal proceedings.

The UK has a strong and well established legal framework that allows for the effective enforcement of trade secrets. As a result, a number of provisions in the Directive already exist in UK law. The changes proposed relate primarily to procedural matters in the courts. They are intended to provide clarity, transparency and consistency across the UK's various jurisdictions.

Responses should be sent to [enforcement@ipo.gov.uk](mailto:enforcement@ipo.gov.uk) by 16 March.