

PRESS RELEASE

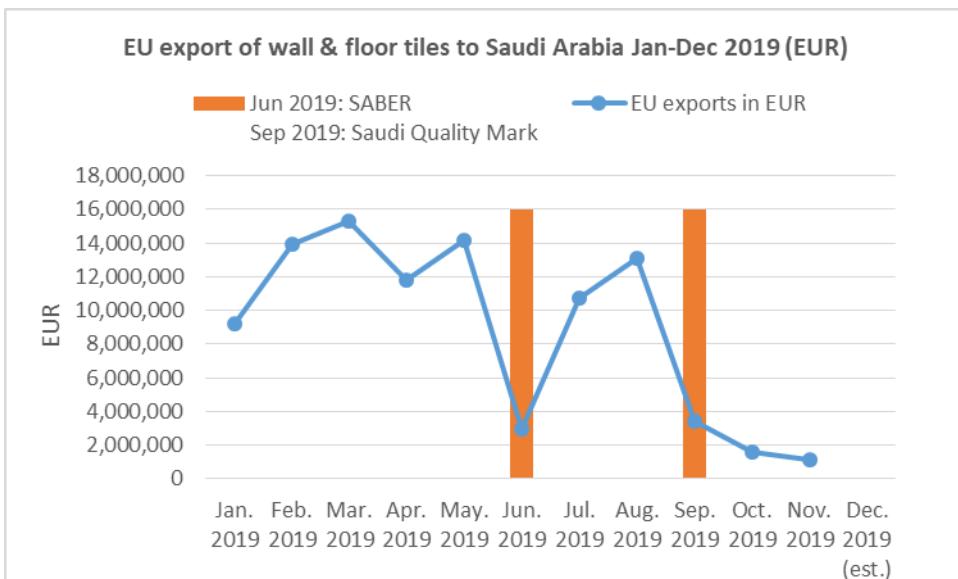
Ceramic industry discussion with Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan on the industry's priorities

On 13 February 2020, a meeting with Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan was hosted in Strasbourg at the initiative of MEP Rodríguez-Piñero, Chair of the EP Ceramics Forum, to discuss the future of the ceramic industry in the EU.

This meeting provided the opportunity for the ceramic industry to stress the conditions to maintain and strengthen the international competitiveness of the European ceramic industry. Thanks to a majority of SMEs, the backbone of the ceramic industry, 30% of the industry's production is currently exported outside of the EU, which contributes positively to the EU's ceramic industry trade balance of more than 4 billion euros.

In relation to trade policy, free and fair trade is fundamental to secure a level playing field. This has been particularly weakened by the rise of trade barriers globally. The meeting focused on technical barriers to trade undermining market access for the ceramic tiles companies in Saudi Arabia. The current Saudi Quality Mark requirement has blocked the export of EU ceramic tiles since September. This has resulted in the loss of around 15 million euros per month for the European ceramic tiles producers. The ceramic industry has called for a suspension of the Saudi Quality Mark until a workable set of solutions can be found.

Commissioner Hogan demonstrated his understanding of this issue and expressed his commitment to take immediate action so that the country ends the trade barriers imposed on European ceramic tiles industry resulting from the Quality Mark requirement.



Source: Eurostat

Regarding EU trade defence, and reflecting the recent practice and decisions adopted at EU level in relation to ceramic products, the ceramic industry called on the Commission to continue to strengthen the EU Trade Defence Instruments, particularly when applied to SME sectors, and to ensure that early actions are taken whenever unfair trade practices arise.

In the context of ongoing efforts to decarbonise and to deliver on the objectives of the European Green Deal, the ceramic industry needs a level playing field to remain competitive and continue performing as an export champion. In that respect, the European ceramic industry shared with Commissioner Hogan its position on the draft revised ETS State Aid Guidelines which currently exclude the ceramic tiles sector, although both quantitative and qualitative factors justify that the sector should be considered for inclusion.



From left to right: Enrico Lupi of Confindustria Ceramica , Alberto Echavarría of ASCER , Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan, MEP Rodríguez-Piñero, Alain Delcourt President of Cerame-Unie, and Renaud Batier of Cerame-Unie

Source: Twitter

The European ceramic industry covers a wide range of products including abrasives, bricks & roof tiles, clay pipes, wall & floor tiles, refractories, sanitaryware, table- & ornamentalware, technical ceramics, expanded clay and flower pots. The industry generates over 200,000 direct jobs and a production value of €31 billion in the EU.

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