

PRESS RELEASE – 07 May 2021

PUBLICATION OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION REPORT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TBR INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE SAUDI QUALITY MARK

07 May 2021, Brussels – The ceramic industry acknowledges the publication of the final examination report in the framework of the TBR Investigation against the Saudi Quality Mark, which the report finds to be an obstacle to trade in violation of WTO law.

On 23 April 2020, Cerame-Unie and CET lodged a complaint under the Trade Barrier Regulation 2015/1843 against the Technical Regulations in Saudi Arabia establishing a mandatory Quality Mark for domestic and imported ceramic tiles. The Saudi Quality Mark (SQM) entered into force in September 2019 and resulted in a *de facto* blockage of EU exports until February 2020. After reviewing the TBR complaint, the Commission opened a TBR investigation on 24 June 2020.

On 4 May 2021, the Commission published the final examination report establishing that it is in EU's interest to act in respect of this obstacle to trade. The findings of the investigation as set out in the report clearly establish the multiple violations of WTO TBT Agreement and GATT 1994 by the Saudi's measures in line with the allegations made by Cerame-Unie/CET in its complaint.

The report also recognises that the burdensome procedures related to the SQM certification have severely impacted the EU exports of ceramic tiles to Saudi Arabia and continue to affect EU exports negatively.

Cerame-Unie/CET believe that it is paramount for the EU to quickly take all appropriate actions to ensure the enforcement of trade rules by Saudi Arabia, including an action at WTO level if Saudi measures are not immediately put in conformity. Cerame-Unie/CET remain at full disposal to engage with the European Commission to support such actions.

The ceramic industry is a resolute supporter of free and fair trade and stands against any infringement of international law resulting in market access barriers. Representing an export champion industry, we are fully committed to ensuring the enforcement of trade rules in third markets and granting fair conditions to EU ceramic exporters in different regions.

We look forward to cooperating with the European Commission in the next steps following the publication of this report.

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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