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E.U. Says Mexico Trade Deal Would Eliminate 95% of Food Export Tariffs

The cuts for European meat, dairy, wine and other products still hinge on Mexico completing its domestic procedures

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The European Commission used a business forum in Mexico City on Wednesday, November 18, to stress the economic value of its updated trade deal with Mexico, saying the accord would remove most Mexican tariffs on European agri-food exports

once Mexico completes its domestic procedures.

In opening remarks at the EU-Mexico Agri-food Trade Relations Business Forum, Commissioner Hansen said the agreement would eliminate 95% of the high Mexican tariffs that now affect European agri-food products. He said the change would create openings across sectors including meat, dairy, cheese, olive oil, fruit and vegetables, pasta, chocolate, processed foods, wines and spirits.

The speech highlighted both the scale of the current trade relationship and the fact that the new terms are not yet available. Hansen said EU food and drink exports to Mexico reached about €2.5 billion in 2025, making Mexico the bloc’s second-largest agri-food export market in Latin America. He also said more than 45,000 European companies export to Mexico, most of them small and medium-sized businesses.

The trade framework at issue is the modernized Global Agreement and the Interim Trade Agreement, which the European Union and Mexico signed in Mexico City on May 22. According to Hansen, the European Parliament gave its consent in July and the Council concluded the agreement shortly after. He said the interim deal will enter into force on the first day of the second month after Mexico finishes its own procedures.

That timeline matters for exporters because the tariff cuts and other trade preferences are still pending. For European beverage producers, the delay means any easier access for wine and spirits shipments to Mexico remains prospective rather than active. The same applies to the stronger legal safeguards the agreement is expected to bring for many protected European product names, including names linked to wines and spirits.

Hansen said the agreement would protect 568 European geographical indications in Mexico while also strengthening protection for Mexican geographical indications in Europe. Geographical indications are names tied to a specific place and production tradition. The protection is meant to limit imitation and misuse and to give consumers more certainty about authenticity. For producers of branded regional beverages as well as food specialties, that part of the deal could be as important as the tariff cuts.

The commissioner also framed the agreement as a tool for smaller exporters. He said the deal would lower tariffs, simplify procedures, increase transparency and include a chapter focused on small businesses. That matters because smaller food and drink companies often face the highest costs when entering a new market, even when demand exists.

Mexico, Hansen said, is a market of about 130 million consumers with growing demand for high-quality and distinctive food products. He told the forum that 119 European agri-food representatives from 22 EU member states had joined the mission to Mexico, which he described as an effort to turn political commitments into business opportunities.

The remarks also linked the trade push to wider geopolitical concerns. Hansen said global trade chains face growing uncertainty, supply chains are under pressure and countries are reassessing economic dependencies. In that environment, he said, the EU sees Mexico as a trusted strategic partner and wants deeper commercial ties based on open and rules-based trade.

At the same time, Hansen said tariff reductions alone would not be enough to expand trade. He said businesses also need predictable rules, efficient procedures and the removal of unnecessary barriers. He added that the EU plans to keep working with Mexican authorities on sanitary and phytosanitary issues so that the market openings promised in the agreement can translate into actual sales and investment.

Hansen also said the EU’s food safety, animal health and plant health standards would remain fully in place under the agreement. He presented that point as part of the trust needed for closer trade ties, especially in sectors where regulation shapes market access as much as tariffs do. For European exporters of wines, spirits and other higher-value food products, the eventual benefits will depend not only on the legal entry into force of the deal but also on how quickly customs, regulatory and labeling rules are put into practice on both sides.