

# ASSUC

European Association of Sugar Traders



## ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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# Foreword

**Dear ASSUC Members,**

On behalf of the Board of ASSUC, it is with immense pleasure that I commend ASSUC's Annual Report 2020/2021 to the national associations of sugar traders in Europe, to the member companies represented therein, and to our affiliate member companies.

It has been a strange and crazy few years, one suddenly feels as though the world is standing upside down.

Being locked up at home, working from home, not able to travel and meet up in person. Worrying about our loved ones, who are vulnerable, and not be able to visit them. The last couple of years have been intense.

But one thing the two years of Covid have shown is that we are flexible, responsive, and able to adapt quickly, both in personal life as well as in business.





For ASSUC, these have also been challenging times;

Whereas in the past, personal contact with the EU network in Brussels was vital to our role as the voice of EU sugar trade, suddenly, we have had to engage with all our stakeholders online.

This engagement has been all the more important given the fast pace of the EU Commission's ambitious new regulations on horizontal issues such as sustainability, due diligence, and the environment.

In the meantime, our previous Secretary-General Mr. Daniel Vega- Perez went on to pursue new opportunities, and ASSUC recruited a new Secretary-General, Ms. Lebo Mofolo. Onboarding was virtual, which in the past we would not have thought possible, but it proved to work!

After two years of holding ASSUC board meetings online, it was with great relief that we had our first in-person board meeting in March 2022.

Currently, Europe is confronted with a devastating and heartbreaking war by Russia in Ukraine. I sincerely hope that some resolution will be found soon, as through war, the world is losing a part of itself. Meanwhile, we all need to cope with the direct and indirect consequences.

In the pages which follow, you may read in detail the many activities that ASSUC has carried out on behalf of its members. In commending this 2020/ 2021 annual report to you, our members, I ask you to join me in thanking our wonderful team at Rue de Trèves for their hard work during the past years, with special thanks to our Secretary-General, Ms. Lebo Mofolo who despite joining us during the period of the pandemic, really hit the ground running.

Looking forward to meeting you, our members, in person during our General Assembly in June 2022.

**Daniël KERKHOF,**  
*ASSUC President 2020-2022*



# ASSUC

## About

- Founded in 1959, ASSUC is the voice of European Sugar Traders.
- ASSUC is able to make its views heard through regular contacts with the different European institutions as well as other international organisations. The association's role is to provide expertise on market issues and promote the views and good reputation of the sugar trade on behalf of its members.
- ASSUC is officially recognised by the European institutions as the only representative body for European sugar trade and, as such, is regularly consulted on all relevant matters affecting the sector.
- Besides its various representation activities, ASSUC is also the platform for cooperation, discussion and exchange of information amongst sugar trade companies in strict compliance with EU competition law.
- Today, through its membership, ASSUC represents close to 60 sugar trading companies across Europe including affiliated members in the EU and in neighbouring countries.

## Mission

- To highlight and promote the professionalism of all who work in European sugar trade.
- To represent and defend the general interests of our members.
- To inform members of developments at European level.
- To provide a networking platform for all European traders of sugar and its derivatives, be they importers, exporters, dealers, brokers or distributors.



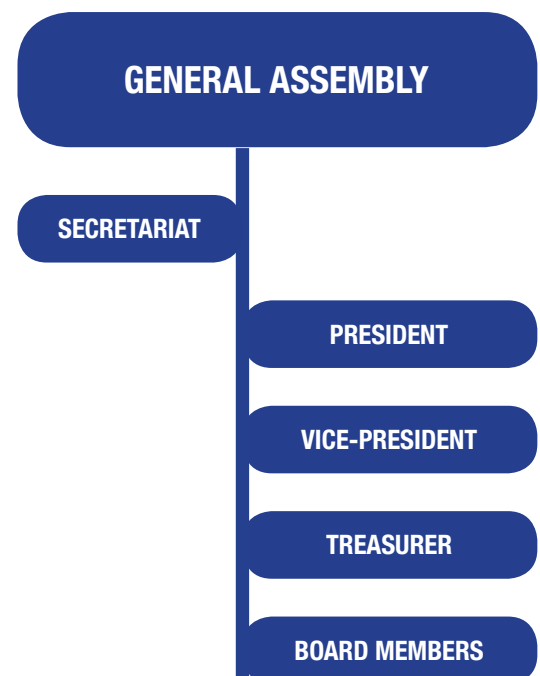


## Activities

- ▽ Monitoring of EU legislation and policy developments in the fields relevant to our members, for example, international trade, agriculture, internal market, customs, tax, sustainability, financial services, enlargement and development policy.
- ▽ Ensuring a permanent link with the European institutions and with other European trade associations in the agri-food sector.
- ▽ Collection and distribution of news, information and documentation to our members on subjects concerning the agri-food sector in general and sugar trade in particular.
- ▽ Strategic advice and coordination of lobbying activities. Adoption of common positions in the name of the sugar trade where necessary. Liaison with various representatives of Member States, third countries and international organisations.
- ▽ Organisation of, and representation of the European sugar trade in high-level events and meetings, facilitating knowledge exchange and networking.

## Structure

- ▽ ASSUC is led by a Board, which meets 4 to 5 times a year. The Board has full competencies in terms of management and administration, subject to the mandate of the General Assembly.
- ▽ Only Full Members of ASSUC are eligible to serve as members of the Board. Board members take office for one year. Every year, the General Assembly elects a President, Vice-President and Treasurer based on a proposal from the Board.
- ▽ The General Assembly, open to all ASSUC members, takes place once a year in Brussels. Due to measures adopted to combat the coronavirus pandemic, ASSUC exceptionally held its General Assemblies remotely in 2020 and 2021.
- ▽ Priority technical issues, such as inward processing relief, are addressed in ad hoc working groups.
- ▽ Day-to-day management and general activities are delegated by the Board to the Secretary-General. Ms. Lebo Mofolo was appointed ASSUC Secretary-General in October 2020.
- ▽ Historically a de facto organisation, ASSUC was officially constituted as a not-for-profit international association (AISBL) under Belgian law on 23 May 2007.
- ▽ ASSUC is registered in the European Transparency Register (ETI) with the identification number: 73074372526-61. The current ASSUC Board was last elected for a one-year mandate at the ASSUC 2021 General Assembly on 18 June 2021.



# Members

## Full membership

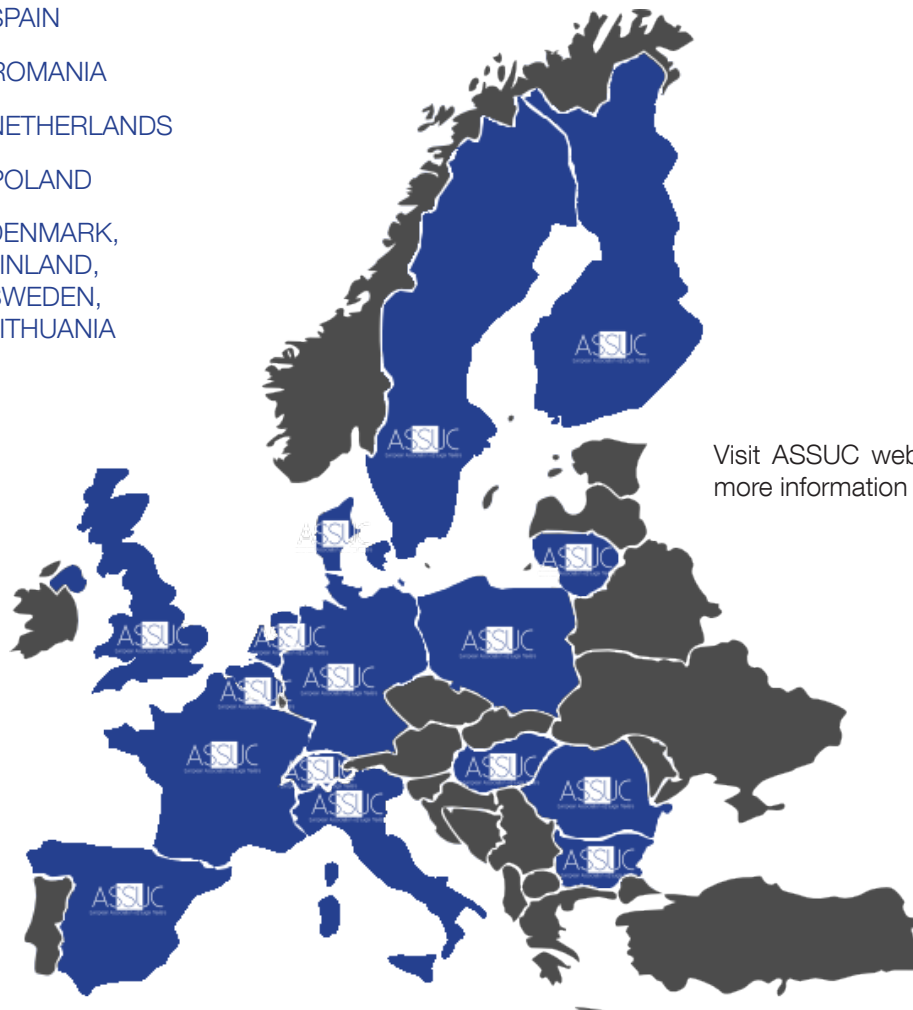
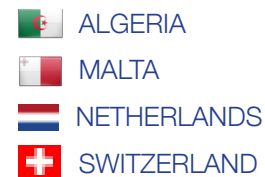
At present ASSUC has 12 full members in 15 EU Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). ASSUC also has affiliated members in Algeria, Malta, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

**Full membership** is open to trade associations or groups of companies established in any European country in which they represent traders (importers, exporters, dealers, brokers and distributors) in sugar and its derivatives.



## Affiliated membership

Affiliated membership is open, under specific conditions, to representative trade associations, individual companies or groups of companies in Europe or outside Europe which are active in the agri-food trade in general and the sugar trade in particular and which wish to contribute towards the objectives of the Association.



Visit ASSUC website [www.assuc.eu](http://www.assuc.eu) for more information on our members.



## Benefits of ASSUC membership

- ▽ Receive accurate and reliable information, advice and early warning on EU regulatory developments that may impact sugar trade or the markets for sugar.
- ▽ Influence the European decision-making process through the provision of reliable information about sugar trade and markets, advice and lobbying activities. ASSUC's openness with European institutions contributes to the evidence base on which policy proposals are made and hence enhances the quality of decision-making at the European level.
- Exchange views and expertise and, where possible, develop common positions with other ASSUC members engaged in similar activities.
- ▽ Enjoy the networking opportunities offered by an association with a European dimension as well as access to the services and support of a permanent office in Brussels.
- ▽ Benefit from preferential access to internal and external meetings and conferences at European level.

## ASSUC Board Members 2021/22

NETHERLANDS	Daniël Kerkhof	PRESIDENT	Limako
ROMANIA	Emilian Dobrescu	VICE-PRESIDENT	Agrana Romania
BELGIUM	Paul Kronacker Alex Delmouly*	TREASURER	Group Sopex
BELGIUM	Marwan Soliman		Finasucre SA / Groupe Iscal
BULGARIA	Ivaylo Mochukov Gergana Pencheva*		Zaharni Zavodi
DENMARK, FINLAND, SWEDEN, LITHUANIA	Martin Eckstrom Jesper Lindskog*		Nordic Sugar
FRANCE	Daniel Calmejane Pierre- Henri Dietz*		Syndicat Français du Commerce des Sucres
GERMANY	Robert Ernst Dr. Stefan Feit* Vincent Schlüter*		Verband des Deutschen Zuckerhandels e.V
HUNGARY	Gergely Kovacs		Hungarian Sugar Industry Association
ITALY	Leonardo Bonsembiante Antonio Fabiani*		Associazione Nazionale Grossisti Zuccheri
NETHERLANDS	Daniël Kerkhof Joost Knook *		Limako
POLAND	Michał Gawryszczak		PAST- Polish Association of Sugar Traders
ROMANIA	Emilian Dobrescu		Agrana Romania
SPAIN	Alejandro Martin Guerrero		Asociación de Fabricantes de Azúcar de España
UNITED KINGDOM	John Ireland Ivo Theiss*		STAUK- Sugar Traders Association of the UK

\* substitutes

# DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION TO ASSUC MEMBERS

## Key issues 2020/21

ASSUC's Secretariat provides ASSUC members with news and regulatory developments at EU level on a daily basis. During the past year in review, the main issues examined have been:

### Market Management:

- ▽ Monitoring the reform of the CAP and the policy environment after the end of quotas;
- ▽ Management of the supply and demand of sugar in the EU domestic market;
- ▽ Regime for the import and export of sugar, expiry of licences and new requirements.

### Regulatory issues:

- ▽ Monitoring of possible safeguards in the MENA region.
- ▽ Single CMO delegated and implementing regulations on sugar following the entry into force of Single CMO n° 1308/2013 (notifications and TRQ management).
- ▽ Review to eliminate the anti-dumping duties and counter-veiling measures in place by Canada on EU sugar exports since 1995.
- ▽ New CAP and post-quota regulations e.g. Trade Mechanisms and market monitoring.
- ▽ Voluntary Coupled Support and its possible export implications.
- ▽ Updates to the Inward Processing Relief (IPR).
- ▽ Trade Mechanisms.



### Free trade agreements and EU trade preferences:

- EU trade negotiations with:
  - › UK
  - › Australia
  - › India
  - › MERCOSUR
  - › Mexico
  - › Indonesia
  - › Thailand
  - › Ukraine
- ▽ Consultation on the Trade Policy Review, revised EU trade policy and new EU trade strategy 2021
- ▽ Preferential tariff scheme between the EU and developing countries
- ▽ Open public consultation on the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) Review
- ▽ Developments at the WTO:
  - › Australia, Brazil and Guatemala vs. India
  - › WTO reform
  - › Apportionment of the CXL WTO sugar quotas with the UK

## Info alerts

ASSUC's Secretariat circulates email alerts as information becomes available, together with in-depth analysis on EU regulatory and policy developments, both general and sugar-specific. ASSUC members are informed without delay of the latest news and facts of vital relevance for sugar trade. As much as possible while respecting confidentiality, ASSUC members receive the original, official documents, proposals and working papers of the EU institutions.

### EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy

- Carbon border adjustment mechanism
- Supply chain due-diligence / sustainable corporate governance
- Deforestation-free imports
- EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices



## Publications in the EU Official Journal

ASSUC members are regularly informed of the publications in the EU Official Journal regarding EU legislation relevant for the sugar market and trading.

## Reports on meetings at EU level

ASSUC's Secretariat regularly informs ASSUC members of the news and regulatory developments discussed at the Sugar Management Committee, and the Management Committee on the Common Organisation of Agricultural Markets. ASSUC also informs members of EU developments and discussions concerning market access for sugar, through participation in the Civil Society Dialogues of DG TRADE, as well as briefing members on customs discussions at the Trade Contact Group of DG TAXUD.

## EU statistics on sugar imports and exports

The ASSUC Secretariat provides all ASSUC members with the latest statistics of the European Commission on sugar imports (under the EPA-EBA regime and TRQs, as well as sugar price reports).

## ASSUC website

With its cutting-edge ergonomic design, the ASSUC website at <http://www.assuc.eu> has lightweight navigation to display clear information about the role and organization of our trade association and content of general interest. The website also incorporates a Twitter feed with 2265 followers. ASSUC is also present on LinkedIn.

## ASSUC Newsletters

ASSUC's newsletter is sent out to all ASSUC members. It provides an overview of ASSUC latest activities and a background to the latest regulatory developments at EU level. ASSUC newsletter is a tool to keep members updated throughout the year and communicate on the association's meetings.

# REPRESENTATION OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

## Contributing to EU policy making

ASSUC has long-standing and a well-established network in Brussels. Through its various contacts, ASSUC voices the common interests of its members towards EU policy makers and other stakeholders. The Association regularly interacts with EU public authorities and other interested parties to seek common ground for improving the functioning of the sugar market. Key priorities in 2020-2021 were:

- EU market management and monitoring post-quotas;
- The implications for sugar trade of the EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy;
- Trade Mechanisms; and
- Trade negotiations and Brexit.

## ASSUC position papers and press releases

Whenever deemed necessary (e.g. when potential regulatory issues that might affect the interests of ASSUC members have been identified), ASSUC's Secretariat proposes and the Board may agree position papers and letters addressed to the relevant DGs of the European Commission, European Parliament and/or other key players.

# MEETINGS AND MONITORING ACTIVITIES

## ASSUC Board meetings

During this period, ASSUC Board Meetings were held on the following dates:

- › 17 March 2020 › 23 September 2020 › 23 February 2021
- › 18 June 2020 › 21 October 2020 › 05 May 2021
- › 1 July 2020 › 10 December 2020 › 21 September 2021
- › 8 December 2021

The main issues on the agenda were:

- ▽ Sugar market: management of the supply and demand of sugar in the EU Market, Egypt sugar import ban, sugar exports, preferential imports, study on the adaptation of the sugar sector to the post-quota environment, new CAP and Brexit. In this context, the Board held informal meetings and exchanged letters with the Commission.
- ▽ In terms of administrative affairs, the Board discussed ASSUC finances, a modification on the conditions of ASSUC membership and the update of the website.

## ASSUC 2020/21 General Assemblies

ASSUC's 2020 General Assembly extraordinarily took place online on 4 August due to the measures in place to combat the coronavirus pandemic. A second extraordinary General Meeting took place in October 2020, in order to facilitate the election of ASSUC's new board. ASSUC's 2021 General Assembly also extraordinarily took place online on 18 June 2021, to elect a new board.

## Conferences

- › The 2020 EU Agricultural Outlook conference (16 & 17 December 2020)
- › ISO 29th Seminar (24 & 25 November 2020)
- › 2021 Agricultural Outlook Spring Workshop (7 & 8 June 2021)
- › 2021 Agricultural Outlook Autumn Workshop (20 & 21 October 2021)
- › ISO 30th Seminar (23 & 24 November 2021)
- › The 2021 EU Agricultural Outlook conference (9 & 10 December 2021)
- › S&P Platts European Sugar Virtual Conference (19 & 20 October 2021)

## Sugar market Observatory

The European Commission established the European Sugar Market Observatory (SMO) with the aim to ensure market transparency as the new EU sugar policy entered into force in 2017 and to exchange views on market data, estimates and prospects for the short and medium terms. The SMO is composed of qualified experts appointed in a personal capacity as representatives of the various stakeholders in the EU, including of course ASSUC. Two experts from ASSUC have been appointed by the Commission to the SMO and have contributed to the success of the SMO by providing expert analysis and "first hand" information about the situation and prospects of the sugar markets both in Europe and internationally. The Secretariat, represented by ASSUC's Secretary-General, is also present at the SMO as an observer. Meetings of the SMO have taken place on:

- › 06 May 2020 › 09 February 2021
- › 30 June 2020 › 02 June 2021
- › 12 November 2020 › 09 November 2021

## United Kingdom/Brexit

In the context of the Brexit negotiations, ASSUC has been regularly consulted together with other agri-trade stakeholders by the European Commission Task Force for the preparation and conduct of the negotiations with the United Kingdom.

ASSUC seized the opportunity to present its concerns and priorities for the negotiations and provided expertise and information to European institutions throughout the Brexit negotiations and the establishment of the future trade relations between the United Kingdom and the EU.

Following the adoption of the EU – UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) in January 2021, ASSUC has been engaged with the European Commission and the UK Government representatives on issues around sugar, including meetings on customs and regulatory issues with DG TAXUD and the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for International Trade (DIT), and HMRC on rules of origin, the UK border operating model, and UK free trade agreement negotiations affecting sugar. Additionally, ASSUC published a fact-sheet on rules of origin and market access for sugar under the TCA.

### UK Autonomous Tariff Quota for Sugar

ASSUC provided coverage, and engaged with members and UK authorities on the UK's planned raw sugar autonomous tariff quota of 260,000 tonnes, which came into force in 2021. ASSUC continues to monitor the implementation of this TRQ and also liaise with the UK DIT and DEFRA on the management of the UK sugar quotas.



# DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue meetings and Expert Groups

The DG Trade Civil Society Dialogue (CSD) is an important instrument for the exchange of views on trade policy between DG Trade officials and a wide range of stakeholders' representatives. Within the framework of the CSD, ASSUC's Secretariat took part in several meetings organised on issues such as the reformed GSP, agriculture trade and EU FTAs. The Market Access Advisory Committee (MAAC) is organised by DG Trade to discuss with stakeholders and Member States specific market access issues in third countries in order to find joint approaches to address these. ASSUC has, since 2021, also participated in the Trade Contact Group of DG TAXUD, dealing with technical customs issues such as special customs procedures (inward processing relief), and broader customs regulatory issues.

- Civil Society Dialogue with the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer (24 November 2020)
- Civil Society Dialogue with EVP Dombrovskis General meeting with the Commissioner (13 November 2020)
- Civil Society Dialogue with Helena König on Australia, New Zealand and South and South East Asia (10 November 2020)
- EU – UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) (21 January 2021)
- Presentation of the interim report of the study in support of an impact assessment to prepare the review of the GSP Regulation (25 February 2021)
- EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador ex-post evaluation (interim report) (20 April 2021)
- Trade Policy Day (26 April 2021)
- Central America ex-post evaluation - inception report (07 May 2021)
- Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Economic and Partnership Agreement (EPA) SIA (final report) (24 June 2021)
- WTO REFORM & Initiatives (06 July 2021)
- Civil Society Dialogue on the Review of the 15-Point Action Plan for Trade and Sustainable Development and on the Trade Policy Review actions on forced labour (19 July 2021)
- Meeting on Australia and New Zealand (08 September 2021)
- Meeting with EVP Dombrovskis (23 September 2021)
- Trade Contact Group - 59th Plenary meeting (30 September 2021)
- CSD on the comparative study of trade and sustainable development (TSD) provisions in trade agreements of other countries to support the Review of the 15- point Action Plan (26 October 2021)
- Implementation and Enforcement: Presentation of Annual Report with Denis Redonnet (08 November 2021)
- EU-Colombia/Peru/Ecuador ex-post evaluation (final report) (15 November 2021)

## DG Agri Civil Dialogue Groups on sugar and international aspects of agriculture

ASSUC is recognised via SACAR under Commission decision of 18 July December 2014 as the representative organisation for the import and export trade in sugar. As such, the Association is represented at Civil Dialogue Groups (CDGs) of DG Agriculture, which gather representatives of the agricultural sector (producers, industry, trade, consumers), as well as NGOs, and meets regularly throughout the year (see below). Also, ASSUC participates via SACAR in the CDG on International Aspects of Agriculture which takes place twice a year:

- › 29 September 2020 – CDG Arable crops Sugar
- › 19 April 2021 – CDG Arable crops Sugar
- › 05 October 2021 – CDG Arable crops Sugar
- › 18 November 2022 – CDG Arable crops Sugar

## Other Meetings

- › DG TRADE
- › DG AGRI
- › DG TAXUD
- › European Council
- › European Economic and Social Committee
- › European Parliament INTA & AGRI Committees
- › CIBE – International Confederation of European Beet Growers
- › CEFS – European Association of Sugar Producers
- › CIUS – European Sugar Users Association
- › ESRA – European Sugar Refineries Association
- › Copa-Cogeca – Umbrella Association for the EU Farmer & Cooperatives
- › CELCAA – Umbrella Association for the EU agri-trade

# The ASSUC office in Brussels

## Lebo Mofolo

Secretary General

(General enquiries, ASSUC activities, membership information, lobbying & advocacy)

Tel: +32 2 736 68 73

Email: [lebo.mofolo@assuc.eu](mailto:lebo.mofolo@assuc.eu)

English is the working language of the ASSUC secretariat. Contact can also be made in Spanish and French.

The ASSUC office is based on Rue de Trèves in Brussels, at the heart of the European Institutions between DG Agriculture and the European Parliament.



## ASSUC aisbl

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ETI register identification number:  
73074372526-61

