

NOTICE TO IMPORTERS**Imports of sugar into the Community from countries in the western Balkans**

(2002/C 152/05)

The European Commission informs the Community operators that there is reasonable doubt as to the proper application of the preferential arrangements for sugar of headings CN 1701 and CN 1702, which is declared at import as originating in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in order to benefit from preferential tariff measures.

A significant and rapid increase in preferential imports of sugar into the Community from certain countries in the western Balkans has been registered since the beginning of 2001, while the countries concerned have in the recent past shown a deficit in sugar production. At the same time, exports of sugar from the Community to the countries in the region have increased by roughly the same level. This development of trade in both directions appears to be highly artificial and there are indications pointing to the possibility of fraud.

Community operators presenting documentary evidence of origin with a view to securing preferential treatment for sugar of tariff headings CN 1701 and CN 1702 are therefore advised to take all the necessary precautions, since the release of the goods in question for free circulation may give rise to a customs debt and lead to fraud against the Community's financial interests.
