

**Question for written answer E-001639/2024
to the Commission**
Rule 144
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Subject: Spread of South African citrus thrips in the Mediterranean basin

In August 2024, two new cases of *Scirtothrips aurantii* were detected in the province of Castellón. *Scirtothrips aurantii*, or South African citrus thrips, is a pest that feeds on fruit and leaves, causing severe cell damage that leads to scarring.

It is commonly found on citrus fruits but affects others, too. It was first detected in 2020 in southern Spain, later spreading to Portugal. The damage from this pest affects plants' photosynthetic activity, and primarily their fruit, resulting in significant losses, rejects and higher production costs.

Given the source of the pest, the rise in citrus imports and the risk of new pests entering the EU, I would ask the following questions:

1. Is the Commission planning any type of programme to support research or preventive and containment measures for the areas affected?
2. Does it intend to extend the requirement for cold treatment to other citrus species, such as mandarins or grapefruits?
3. Does it intend to increase checks and inspections both at origin and at the border in order to ensure the phytosanitary safety of imports?

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