Question for written answer E-000438/2025
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: EU response to the *Scirtothrips aurantii* infestation and citrus fruit imports from South Africa

Scirtothrips aurantii is a pest that was first found in the EU in 2020. Since 2024, it has spread rapidly and is now infesting key crops such as citrus fruit, persimmon, grape and pomegranate in 325 Valencian municipalities. This pest, originally from South Africa and now found in other African countries, Australia and Yemen, most likely arrived in the EU through citrus fruit imports. It hits farmers in the pocket since the fruit now has a lower value, and increased plant health costs are currently borne by producers. *Scirtothrips aurantii* is included on EPPO's A1 list and is classified as a quarantine pest in Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072.

In light of this:

1. What urgent measures will the Commission take to increase plant health checks on imports of plants from countries in which *Scirtothrips aurantii* is endemic, such as South Africa?

2. Will a mandatory refrigeration be imposed for these imports and will *Scirtothrips aurantii* be added to the EU's list of priority pests to ensure a more coordinated approach?

3. Which clauses in the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement will be activated to require more stringent certifications and treatments or checks at the point of origin for citrus imports?

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