

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002563/24
to the Commission
Mireia Borrás Pabón (PPE)
(18 November 2024)**

Subject: Serious disruptions to Member States' control systems and food sovereignty

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products establishes measures that the Commission can take in the event that 'a serious disruption in a Member State's control system' is found. However, it gives the Commission discretion to determine whether a disruption has actually taken place or not.

The increasing number of interceptions by the EU regarding products from third countries which do not conform to EU rules is alarming. The lack of control over contaminated products in the single market poses a clear risk to Member States and their food sovereignty. I would therefore like to ask:

1. Does the Commission have specific parameters for determining whether the Member States' control systems have been seriously disrupted?
2. Given the breaches of the rules by countries such as China and South Africa, is the Commission considering classifying certain countries as 'trade risks', with a view, among other matters, to protecting our countries' food sovereignty?

Submitted: 18.11.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(30 January 2025)**

1. Since Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council on official controls on the agri-food chain ⁽¹⁾ does not define what constitutes a 'serious disruption' of a Member State's control system, the Commission uses a wide range of evidence on the implementation of Union legislation by Member States to evaluate their official control systems. Such evidence includes the reports of the Commission's audits, data from information technology (IT) systems managed by the Commission and from Member States' annual reports, and information related to financial support for actions carried out by Member States. So far, a serious disruption has only been found in the specific situation of the COVID-19 pandemic ⁽²⁾.

2. Consignments entering the Union from non-EU countries are subject to a robust system of official controls based on harmonised EU legislation, notably Regulation (EU) 2017/625, which aims to ensure that only safe commodities may enter the EU. In cases of identified 'trade risks', a number of effective measures are available which include intensified official controls at entry into the Union for products of animal origin ⁽³⁾, the imposition of treatments to ensure the absence of health risks, sampling and testing and controls performed by the country of origin, emergency measures including the suspension of entry of commodities ⁽⁴⁾ and the de-listing of non-EU countries' establishments, regions or of whole non-EU countries, so that import of concerned agri-food products is to be restricted.

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj>

⁽²⁾ No longer in force, date of end of validity: 01/09/2021: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/466/oj

⁽³⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/1873/oj

⁽⁴⁾ Example: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2022/478/oj