

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002613/24
to the Commission
Benoit Cassart (Renew)
(21 November 2024)**

Subject: Draft EU-Mercosur free trade agreement

Trade agreements, such as the EU-Mercosur one, can open up the EU market to products which do not comply with EU environmental standards. This leads to fears that there will be a distortion of competition which will adversely affect EU farmers.

1. What measures does the Commission intend to take to avoid the weakening of the EU agricultural sector?
2. How does the Commission intend to organise cooperation with the Commissioner for Agriculture, as well as between DG TRADE and DG AGRI, so as to better protect EU farmers?

Submitted: 21.11.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(14 January 2025)**

The concessions on agricultural products within the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement are carefully calibrated to protect the interest of EU farmers and the EU agri-food sector.

For the most sensitive sectors such as beef, poultry, sugar and ethanol, the agreement provides for import quotas at reduced import duties for volumes that are only a very small fraction of the EU market (e.g. for beef the Tariff Rate Quotas with a reduced in-bound tariff granted to four Mercosur countries corresponds to about 1.5% of current beef consumption in the EU), and which will be phased-in over long periods to give EU stakeholders time to adapt.

Furthermore, the agreement includes a bilateral safeguard applicable as well to products within quotas so that tariff preferences can be temporarily withdrawn in case imports of those products cause, or risk causing, serious injury to the sector concerned.

For the unlikely event that the agricultural sector in the EU is negatively impacted following the implementation of the new agreement, the Commission intend to set up a reserve worth at least one billion EUR under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. This provides an additional safety net and insurance for the sector.

Close cooperation between the Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security, Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency and the Commissioner for Agriculture and Food is secured through the Commission working arrangements with the purpose of continuing supporting the strong international dimension of the EU agriculture and food sectors.
