

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002614/24
to the Commission
Benoit Cassart (Renew)
(21 November 2024)**

Subject: Trade agreements negotiated by the Commission

In order to include mirror clauses in free-trade agreements, including the EU-Mercosur agreement, the EU must ensure that the clauses are justified under the exceptions provided for by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, the WTO currently relies on the Codex Alimentarius ⁽¹⁾, which is much less ambitious than the EU in terms of health and environmental standards for food products.

Does the Commission intend to argue for an ambitious revision of the Codex Alimentarius, by demonstrating scientifically that current WTO standards are not sufficient to ensure adequate health or environmental protection?

Submitted: 21.11.2024

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

As the only member organisation of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the EU is actively involved in the development of the standards of Codex Alimentarius with the main objective of promoting coherence between Codex standards and the EU legislation.

The primary purpose of Codex Alimentarius is protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade. In this context, the EU advocates for the inclusion of sustainability considerations, including environmental aspects, in the development of Codex standards.

For more information on the EU position regarding the role of Codex Alimentarius, the Commission would refer the Honourable Member to its Report to the Parliament and the Council on the application of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural and agri-food products ⁽¹⁾, and in particular to its section on International standard-setting bodies.

¹ ⁽¹⁾The Codex Alimentarius is a collection of internationally adopted and uniformly presented food standards. The aim of these standards is to protect the health and economic interests of consumers and to ensure fair practices in trade in food products. The adoption of the Codex standards can provide a solid foundation for an inspection service.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2022) 226 final: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0226>