

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002642/24
to the Commission
João Oliveira (The Left)
(23 November 2024)**

Subject: Consequences of the EU-Thailand free trade agreement for the canning industry

Talks for an EU-Thailand free trade agreement resumed in 2023 and have raised major concerns in the canning industry in Portugal and other Member States.

The agreement could significantly affect a number of sectors, including the canned tuna sector, in which Thailand is one of the world's largest producers.

Workers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises could be particularly hard hit as a result of unfavourable conditions for domestic production driven by existing asymmetries: input costs, current working and social conditions and various environmental requirements.

We cannot ignore the very real risk of destroying installed production capacity, wasting productive resources and wiping out jobs.

In view of the above:

1. What studies has the Commission carried out into the free trade agreement's impact on the canning sector and what conclusions has it drawn, particularly with regard to the impact on canned tuna?
2. Taking into account the negative impacts foreseen, what does the Commission make of the possibility of safeguarding production in Portugal and other Member States and what measures does it believe could be adopted to that end?
3. Is the Commission willing to halt negotiations if such safeguards prove impossible to secure?

Submitted: 23.11.2024

**Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(5 February 2025)**

The Commission takes note of the concerns raised by the Honourable Member about the potential impact of a future Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Thailand on the EU tuna processing industry.

In line with the overall EU approach to trade and investment agreements, also in the negotiations with Thailand the Commission aims at reaching a comprehensive deal that can bring growth opportunities for the EU economy and employment as a whole.

In the negotiating rounds held so far, the EU and Thai negotiating teams have focused on advancing on the consolidation of the texts establishing the normative framework for the future trade relations, and have not yet discussed the treatment for individual products.

Detailed and sector specific market access negotiations will start in the coming months, and will include consultations with relevant stakeholders in line with the usual EU practice for FTA negotiations.

As in all FTA processes, economically sensitive sectors are subject to carefully designed specific modalities for market access which aim at preventing any market disturbances.

Furthermore, as the negotiations enter a more advanced stage, a sustainability impact assessment will be carried out in support of the negotiations in order to provide an in-depth analysis of their potential economic, social, human rights, and environmental impacts.
