

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002648/24
to the Commission
Cristina Maestre (S&D)
(25 November 2024)**

Subject: US tariffs on Spanish black olives

In 2017, the United States imposed anti-subsidy and anti-dumping duties ranging from 30% to 44% on black olive imports from Spain, measures that the EU challenged before the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In November 2021, the WTO confirmed that the US measures were in breach of global trade rules. However, Washington has yet to implement the WTO's recommendations, the deadline for which expired in January 2023.

We welcome the EU's recent request to the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) to authorise retaliatory tariffs of USD 35 million per year. However, the formal objection by the US has pushed the case into arbitration, postponing any resolution that could have been discussed at the DSB meeting scheduled for today, 25 November 2024.

Against this backdrop:

1. What concrete measures is the Commission considering to put an end to this long-standing trade dispute and protect European farmers?
2. Are compensation measures being envisaged for Spain's black olive sector, which has suffered losses estimated at EUR 800 million since the beginning of the conflict?
3. In addition, in the Commission's view, how likely is a successful settlement after Donald Trump's return to the US presidency?

Submitted: 25.11.2024

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

On 14 November 2024 ⁽¹⁾, the EU requested to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body to authorise the imposition of countermeasures due to the United States (US) lack of compliance with the Panel report ⁽²⁾.

As provided by Article 22.6 ⁽³⁾ of the Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU), the US are entitled to request an arbitration on the level of the countermeasures proposed by the EU.

The EU will do its best to enable a swift conclusion of the arbitration proceeding. Once this step is finalised, the EU could proceed, in accordance with the WTO and EU framework, to adopt countermeasures.

To support the table olive sector, possibilities exist under Rural Development Programmes ⁽⁴⁾ to help operators adapt their production processes to other market opportunities.

There is also support for the sector under the promotion aid scheme. Besides, under the rules concerning *de minimis* aid, a Member State may grant support to a single processor within a period of three fiscal years.

In addition, companies can receive aid without prior notification to the Commission as regards research and development, training and investment aid under the conditions of the General Block Exemption Regulation ⁽⁵⁾.

The EU will continue to engage with the new US administration in order to achieve a solution to this dispute which is in the interest of EU exporters.

⁽¹⁾ WT/DS577/20; https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/cases_e/ds577_e.htm

⁽²⁾ WT/DS577/RW; https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/577rw_a_e.pdf

⁽³⁾ <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/enforcement/WTO/US.Open.Stmt.Arb.Mtg.%28as%20deliv%29.fin.%28public%29.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development/country_en

⁽⁵⁾ Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187, 26.6.2014, p. 1-78; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2014/651/oj>