

EN
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Answer given by Mr Hansen
on behalf of the European Commission
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Food stockpiling has been discussed by the European Food Security Crisis preparedness and response Mechanism (EFSCM) on several occasions, through exchanges of best practices and surveys. The topic also features in its 2025 work programme with a view to further assess and discuss potential needs. This is in line with recommendations in the Niinistö¹ and Strategic Dialogue² reports. The Commission fully shares the ambition and main recommendation of the Niinistö report, including the importance of preparedness for vital societal functions.

World Trade Organization (WTO) rules allow public stockholding for food security purposes programmes without limits provided that stocks are acquired and released at market prices. Developing countries may also acquire and release stocks at administered prices under the standard limits on what in WTO terminology is considered 'trade distorting support'³. These limits are meant to prevent circumvention of commitments on trade distorting support and avoid distorting effects on other WTO members, in particular net food importing Members. These, as well as all other aspects of agricultural support are under negotiations with the aim of reducing trade distortions. So far, no proposal related to public stockholding for food security purposes has gained consensus. The EU will continue its engagement with other WTO Members considering the importance of this topic for the overall negotiations on agricultural subsidies as well as taking into account different approaches to food security related policies.

¹ https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/5bb2881f-9e29-42f2-8b77-8739b19d047c_en?filename=2024_Niinisto-report_Book_VF.pdf

² https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/main-initiatives-strategic-dialogue-future-eu-agriculture_en

³ WTO Agreement on Agriculture (1994), Annex 2, paragraph 3.