

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002777/24
to the Commission**

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(5 December 2024)

Subject: Upcoming conclusion of the Mercosur agreement: stabbing French farmers in the back

The upcoming signature of the agreement between the European Union and Mercosur (Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay and Paraguay) poses a serious threat to French farming.

French farmers are already penalised by the ‘degrowth’ ideology imposed on them by the Commission, and this agreement plans to facilitate access to the EU market for a number of food products that do not meet our production standards, including 99 000 tonnes of beef, 180 000 tonnes of sugar and 180 000 tonnes of poultry each year.

1. Is the Commission aware that the anger felt by farmers — particularly those working in the meat sector — will not dissipate as long as they continue to be sacrificed at the altar of globalism and free trade?
2. Does the Commission feel that it is normal for this agreement to be concluded in such a secretive and opaque manner, without any consultation of MEPs?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 5.12.2024

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(21 March 2025)

In order to reconcile the need to make meaningful concessions to EU’s partners with the preservation of the interests and the livelihood of European farmers, the Commission negotiated clear limits to the requests by Mercosur to open the beef, poultry and sugar markets.

Tariff rate quota volumes in the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement were therefore carefully calibrated to take account of conditions in the relevant agricultural market and the cumulative impact effects originating from other free trade agreements ⁽¹⁾.

For beef, the tariff rate quotas negotiated under the agreement have been kept within limits at an overall volume of 99 000 tons, of which 55% is reserved for fresh meat. In addition, this quota with a reduced tariff rate of 7.5% will be phased in over a period of seven years.

Transparency towards the European Parliament is and will remain a priority for the Commission, notably as regards the Mercosur Agreement.

In the past legislature (2019-2024), the Commission informed the European Parliament on these negotiations on a regular and frequent basis, namely at 14 monitoring groups and two technical briefings and provided the state of play in 10 committees or delegation meetings other than the International Trade Committee.

More than 40 bilateral meetings were also held with individual Members of the European Parliament or with political groups. The Trade and Economic Security Commissioner provided an extensive brief on the content of the Agreement at the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on 30 January 2025 and at the European Parliament plenary on 13 February 2025 and declared his intention to continue this dialogue during the ratification process.

¹ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Julie Rechagneux (PfE), Julien Leonardelli (PfE), Aleksandar Nikolic (PfE), Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE), Valérie Deloge (PfE)

⁽¹⁾ Ferrari, E., Elleby, C., De Jong, B., M’barek, R. and Perez Dominguez, I., Cumulative economic impact of upcoming trade agreements on EU agriculture, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, doi:10.2760/54976, JRC135540.