

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001813/25
to the Commission**

**Gilles Pennelle (PfE), Marie Dauchy (PfE), Philippe Olivier (PfE), Mélanie Disdier (PfE), Julien Leonardelli (PfE),
Christophe Bay (PfE)**
(6 May 2025)

Subject: Mercosur agreement: Agen prunes sector at risk!

France's Agen prune has protected geographical indication status, providing the guarantee that the product's origin and quality are attached to a specific region and specialised know-how. Some 800 producers and 60 processing companies work in this sector, making it an important economic asset.

In the context of the agreement discussions with the Mercosur countries, the Commission agreed that European agriculture, and French agriculture in particular, would be affected by the massive imports of agricultural products from South America. On the other hand, it argued that products with designations of origin would benefit from new markets and even wider recognition than they currently enjoy in the EU.

1. Can the Commission therefore confirm that the term 'Agen' and any reference to this French geographical indication will be protected so that they cannot be used fraudulently for plums and prunes from Mercosur countries?
2. Can it guarantee that the Agen prune sector, which is subject to strict rules on the use of plant protection products, will not be placed in direct competition with third-country producers who produce prunes without having to comply with the same rules?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(2 July 2025)

The EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement (EMPA) protects 344 EU geographical indications (GIs), including the term 'Pruneaux d'Agen', in the four Mercosur countries.

The Commission can confirm that the level of protection for these EU GIs under the EMPA is comparable to the high level of protection in the EU.

During a transition period of 10 years following the entry into force of the EMPA, specific rules would apply for terms 'D'Agen' or 'Ciruela D'Agen'.

In this framework, only legitimate prior users may use these terms in the Mercosur countries if accompanied by clear indication of the geographical origin to avoid any confusion with the placing on the market of 'Pruneaux d'Agen' produced in France.

There is no evidence based on available impact studies of the EMPA that agriculture in the EU or in France would be affected by massive imports of agricultural products from South America.

The EU's sanitary and phytosanitary standards fully apply to imported products, which must always comply with the EU's stringent food safety requirements including maximum residue limits for pesticides. This applies regardless of trade agreements with third countries, including Mercosur.

As outlined in the Commission's Communication 'A Vision for Agriculture and Food' of 19 February 2025 ⁽¹⁾, the EU will strive toward fairer global level playing field for agriculture.

The Commission will pursue, in line with international rules, a stronger alignment of production standards applied to imported products, including on pesticides.

¹ This question is supported by Members other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (PfE), Mathilde Androuët (PfE), Valérie Deloge (PfE)

⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — A vision for Agriculture and Food. Shaping together an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations, COM/2025/75 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0075>.