

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002319/25
to the Commission
Marcin Sypniewski (ESN)
(10 June 2025)**

Subject: Health of the Polish footwear industry

The footwear industry in Poland is in a deep crisis, caused by an uncontrolled inflow of cheap footwear from outside the EU, which often fails to meet EU chemical and environmental standards. In 2022, over 258 million pairs of shoes were imported into Poland, as much as 60% of them from China, and often at prices suggesting a circumvention of REACH and ECHA rules.

The crisis has also been exacerbated by the loss of strategic eastern markets (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine) following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Poland, which was the fourth largest manufacturer of footwear in Europe, has lost access to around 250 million consumers, while there has been no reduction in imports of poor quality products from Asia. Polish producers are not able to compete with goods that may contain carcinogens (chromium VI, phthalates, benzene), and the lack of an obligation to label the real country of origin further misleads consumers.

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission planning to introduce a mandatory indication of the country of origin ('Made in')?
2. Is the Commission considering tightening checks on compliance of imported footwear with REACH?
3. What action will the Commission take to protect EU producers from unfair competition?

Submitted: 10.6.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Séjourné on behalf of the European Commission
(30 September 2025)**

The Commission understands that while Poland has emerged as a major footwear trade hub in Central Europe, the Polish footwear industry has been facing a combination of market and competition challenges.

On information on the country of origin ('Made in'), footwear labelling rules, as governed by Directive 94/11/EC ⁽¹⁾, foresee already that such additional information may be provided, on a voluntary basis. In any case the voluntary origin labelling should be made in accordance with the relevant non-preferential Rules of Origin ⁽²⁾ applicable to imports into the European Union.

Furthermore, misleading the consumer on the geographical origin of a product could fall under the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive ⁽³⁾. The Commission has currently no plans to introduce a mandatory indication of the country of origin for footwear sold in the EU.

On controls, the Commission is aiming for strengthened market surveillance to ensure that imported products, notably via e-commerce, comply with EU rules (including in relation to chemical substances restricted under the regulation on the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals ⁽⁴⁾).

The e-commerce Communication ⁽⁵⁾ announced the launch of Priority Control Areas, focusing specifically on e-commerce imports and products with significant safety hazards and risk of non-compliance.

On unfair competition, the Commission proposal for a Customs reform package includes the abolition of the current threshold, whereby goods valued up to EUR 150 are exempt from customs duty, to improve fairness for EU economic operators.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:01994L0011-20130701>.

⁽²⁾ See https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/customs/international-affairs/origin-goods/non-preferential-rules-origin_en and https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/af7b2672-610c-411b-8723-ea1f7d46d3fd_en?filename=SectionXII_ch64_67_HS2022.pdf.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02005L0029-20220528>.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1907/oj/eng>.

⁽⁵⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=comnat:COM_2025_0037_FIN.