

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000038/26
to the Commission
Anna Maria Cisint (PFE)
(8 January 2026)**

Subject: Request for measures to protect the Italian and European tomato industry from the flood of Moroccan tomatoes entering the EU market

According to data published on the Commission's website, Italy was responsible for 36% of the EU tomato harvest in 2024, making it the EU's largest tomato producer, followed by Spain and Portugal.

The EU imports 800 000 tonnes of fresh tomatoes each year and its main supplier is Morocco. Although imports from Morocco to Italy seem low, almost 35 000 tonnes of Moroccan tomatoes were re-exported from France to Italy in 2024.

The yield of the areas under cultivation in Morocco has increased considerably and is now directed towards mass exports given that production is possible in the winter months. This problem comes on top of competition from Asian rice, citrus fruits imported from South Africa and Egypt, and olive oil produced in Türkiye and Tunisia. Industry bodies have expressed serious concerns about the drop in prices and increased fraud, with Moroccan tomatoes masquerading as Italian produce.

In view of the above:

1. How will the Commission ensure that there is equivalence and reciprocity as regards compliance with production standards, and will it consider activating safeguard clauses in the EU-Morocco agreement to protect European farmers?
2. Does it believe that it is necessary and urgent to verify the cumulative impact of imports of agricultural products from third countries with a view to safeguarding Europe's food sovereignty by introducing corrective measures when updating trade agreements?

Submitted: 8.1.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(3 August 2026)**

Food products from third countries, regardless of their origin, must comply with EU food safety requirements. These are enforced through rigorous border controls and audits.

The EU-Morocco Association Agreement and its related protocols aim at ensuring balanced and reciprocal trade relations, and covers control conditions through sanitary and phytosanitary provisions, technical standards and regulations that need to be respected to have access to the other party's market ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission recognises the growing importance of ensuring high global standards and announced in the Vision for Agriculture and Food a stronger alignment of production standards applied to imported products, in line with international rules ⁽²⁾.

The Commission is not considering activating safeguard clauses in the EU-Morocco agreement since there is currently no disruption of the market.

The Commission remains vigilant in monitoring market developments and the proper implementation of the Agreement which, all in all, has been beneficial for EU exports to Morocco in many sectors, including the agri-food sector.

When updating or concluding free trade agreements, the Commission carries out sustainability impact assessments ⁽³⁾. In addition, cumulative studies assessing the economic impact on agriculture are also available ⁽⁴⁾.

The Commission takes a holistic and balanced approach among all sectors, and pays, with regards to import, particular attention to protecting sensitive agricultural products by excluding them from liberalisation or by granting only partial liberalisation, including through carefully calibrated tariff rate quotas as for tomatoes in the EU-Morocco Association Agreement.

⁽¹⁾ Article 8 of Protocol 1 of the Agreement.

⁽²⁾ 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).

⁽³⁾ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/analysis-and-assessment/sustainability-impact-assessments_en.

⁽⁴⁾ JRC Publications — Cumulative economic impact of upcoming trade agreements on EU agriculture: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135540>.