

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000466/26
to the Commission
Sakis Arnaoutoglou (S&D)
(5 February 2026)**

Subject: Protection of European table olive producers — Inequality and lack of reciprocity in trade agreements

According to European table olive sector organisations, the EU-Mercosur agreement creates serious imbalances to the detriment of European producers and processors. In particular, the EU-Mercosur agreement provides for the gradual elimination of tariffs on table olive imports from Mercosur countries over a period of seven years, while at the same time European exports to the same markets continue to be subject to significant tariffs, which undermines the principle of reciprocity.

This development intensifies unfair competition in the EU internal market, increases pressure on producer prices and endangers the sustainability of a strategically important agri-food sector, which fully complies with high European social, environmental and health standards. At the same time, the export potential of European table olives to key international markets is effectively being restricted.

In view of the above:

1. What specific measures does the Commission intend to take to protect European table olive producers and processors from the distortions of competition resulting from this agreement?
2. Does the Commission intend to review the treatment of table olives and ensure effective reciprocity and a level playing field in the EU's trade relations with Mercosur countries?

Submitted: 5.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(19 March 2026)**

On 17 January 2026, the EU and Mercosur signed the Partnership Agreement ⁽¹⁾ and the Interim Trade Agreement ⁽²⁾, based on the political agreement reached on 6 December 2024.

Against a background in which the EU has excluded a much larger number of agricultural products from full liberalisation than Mercosur countries, table olives represented one of the few defensive interests for the Mercosur countries, in particular Argentina, because of the high competitiveness of EU producers. Therefore, similarly to the cases where the EU protected its sensitive products, also Mercosur invoked an exception to the liberalisation of table olives.

On the other hand, the Commission focused its offensive interests on olive oil, a product with a very large export potential in South America, and for which the EU obtained an excellent concession from Mercosur countries, namely the full elimination of tariffs, which are currently as high as 31.5% in Argentina.

In any event, the Mercosur agreement stipulates the possibility of an amendment of the trade provisions, based on the outcome of a review that takes place three years after the entry into force of the agreement. Such a review would be an opportunity for the Commission to reassess the situation as regards tariffs on table olives.

⁽¹⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8371-2023-DCL-1/en/pdf>.

⁽²⁾ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-12417-2025-REV-1/en/pdf>.