

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000737/26
to the Commission**

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(23 February 2026)

Subject: Agreement between the European Union and Australia: what are the consequences for the EU's livestock sectors?

In 2018, Australia and the EU began negotiating a free trade agreement involving preferential tariffs for sensitive agricultural sectors. At that time, the EU proposed to open annual import quotas of 24 000 tonnes of beef and 20 000 tonnes of sheepmeat. Australia wanted these quotas at least doubled, which contributed to the failure of the agreement.

In June 2025, the Commission announced that it wished to reopen talks.

1. Can the Commission provide an update on the negotiations taking place with Australia, specifying the envisaged timetable and the import volumes of beef and sheepmeat currently under discussion?
2. Can the Commission evaluate the impact that such an agreement will have on EU agriculture and, more specifically, on livestock farming?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

Submitted: 23.2.2026

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(24 April 2026)

Following the Australian elections in May 2025, the President of the Commission and the Prime Minister of Australia agreed to resume stock taking discussions on the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement.

Further to series of technical meetings and political level engagement in Brussels, the negotiations were finally concluded on 24 March 2026 on the occasion of the President of the Commission's visit to Australia ⁽¹⁾.

The Commission has been clear with Australia that the EU's agricultural sensitivities not only remain but have heightened compared to 2023.

On the other hand, the red meat sector, namely beef and sheep meat, has been Australia's top offensive interest in agriculture, and overall in the negotiations, which has required a very careful handling.

A very limited and controlled opening of the EU's agricultural market, including sustainability requirements, combined with new export opportunities by eliminating tariffs on EU exports to Australia and by protecting geographical indications, represents a balanced outcome for the EU's agricultural sector.

For the most sensitive products the full volume of opening is very small, accounting for only a fraction of EU consumption (e.g. a quota of 30 600 tonnes for beef, representing around 0.5% of EU consumption; a quota of 25 000 tonnes for sheep meat, representing around 4% of EU consumption) and will be phased in over 10 and 7 years, respectively.

The Commission has also secured a bilateral safeguard clause covering the most sensitive agricultural products to address any unexpected disturbances.

The possible impact of the agreement was addressed in the context of the 2024 update of the study on the cumulative economic impact of trade agreements on EU agriculture ⁽²⁾.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe).

⁽¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ac_26_762.

⁽²⁾ <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135540>.