

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001264/26
to the Commission**

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(25 March 2026)

Subject: Corruption and EU oversight

Brazil-based meat-processing multinational JBS has a documented history of large-scale corruption, including paying bribes to over 1 800 Brazilian politicians to access government loans, which enabled the company to acquire monopoly power in the Brazilian and the US meat markets. ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾ ⁽³⁾

As JBS seeks to expand its presence in the EU market, these structural corruption practices, combined with aggressive tax planning through Luxembourg-based entities, raise serious concerns for fair competition, market integrity and public trust in the EU.

In this context, can the Commission clarify:

1. How it assesses the risks posed by companies with a history of large-scale corruption, such as JBS, when they enter and consolidate their presence in the EU market?
2. How it ensures that EU trade and investment policies do not inadvertently support companies with records of structural corruption and monopolistic practices?

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Answer given by Mr Šefčovič on behalf of the European Commission
(22 May 2026)

The EU's external policies, including trade and investment policies, do not support companies with records of corruption or anti-competitive practices.

The EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement ⁽¹⁾ and the Interim Trade Agreement ⁽²⁾ contain provisions that will help counter corruption in cooperation with the Brazilian authorities and that protect the EU market against potential anti-competitive practices.

In particular, the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement provides for strengthened cooperation on combating corruption, including prevention and investigation activities, the prosecution of offenders, and mutual legal assistance.

The EU-Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement, which has been provisionally in effect since 1 May 2026, provides for an obligation of the Parties to adopt or maintain in force comprehensive competition law which effectively addresses the anti-competitive practices.

It also protects EU producers of sensitive agricultural products (including beef and poultry) against sudden increases of imports from Mercosur by means of tariff quotas and safeguards.

Also, if a company obtains particularly favourable treatment (e.g. cheap government loans), this may qualify as 'foreign subsidies' under the EU's Foreign Subsidies Regulation ⁽³⁾.

The Commission is empowered to assess whether such subsidies may 'distort' the EU market, especially as regards the company's investments in the EU (through mergers and acquisitions) or EU activities with foreign funding and apply redressive measures towards the said company.

These examples illustrate some of the tools the EU uses to address corruption and unfair competition. The Commission employs a range of mechanisms to ensure compliance and protect the integrity of the EU market.

¹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326447126_The_Lava_Jato_Network_Corruption_and_Money_Laundering_in_Brazil?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

² <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2019-07-02/jbs-brazilian-butchers-took-over-the-world?>.

³ <https://www.somo.nl/jbss-global-tax-avoidance-hub-luxembourg/>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A20206A00186&qid=1772192739535>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A20206A00184&qid=1774426176108>.

⁽³⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/2560/oj/eng>.