

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001770/26
to the Commission
Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR)
(30 April 2026)**

Subject: Impact of the EU relinquishing management of the Mercosur meat import quota system on Europeans' food safety

A few days before the EU-Mercosur agreement came into effect, the EU changed the rules on meat imports from Mercosur countries, relinquishing management of the quota system. Instead of the procedure applied to date in which the EU determines the entities to which it issues an import permit, that decision will now be in the hands of South American countries. At the same time, tariffs have been lifted on premium beef imports.

Food from Mercosur countries does not meet EU health security requirements on pesticides and hormones; for example, in November 2025, beef imported from Brazil was found to contain 17β-oestradiol — a carcinogen banned outright for food production in the EU.

By handing over the tools to determine which firms are to export beef to the EU, the Commission is putting European consumers at risk of compromised food safety.

Can the Commission answer the following:

1. On what grounds or legal basis has the EU relinquished management of the quota system?
2. Why have the changes made to the quota management system not been made public?
3. Since the Commission has renounced the possibility of deciding which entities will export beef to the EU, how and under which procedure will product quality controls be carried out with respect to EU standards?

Submitted: 30.4.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(29 June 2026)**

1. The EU has not relinquished the management of the quota system. Import Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQ) established under the EU-Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement (ITA) are administered exclusively by the EU, as laid down by Regulation (EU) 2026/996 ⁽¹⁾, which introduced in Implementing Regulations (EU) 2020/761 ⁽²⁾ and (EU) 2020/1988 ⁽³⁾ rules for the management of those import TRQs for agricultural products. The only element which falls under the competence of Mercosur countries is the issuance of a document which shall accompany all imports into the EU of products under the TRQs, as required by Article 3.30 of the Agreement ⁽⁴⁾. A model of the document was published in the Official Journal on 14 April 2026 ⁽⁵⁾.
2. The Agreement, the regulations and the document referred to above were published in the Official Journal.
3. Minimum frequencies for official controls at the border on products of animal origin entering the EU from third countries are laid down in Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2129 ⁽⁶⁾. Accordingly, documentary and identity checks are performed at a 100% frequency rate, while physical check rates vary from 15% to 30%, depending on the type of meat or product thereof. According to Article 5(3) of the same Regulation, the frequencies of physical checks are to be increased where, for specific goods from specific third countries, the level of non-compliance in the last 12 months exceeds by 30% the average rate of non-compliance for the same category of goods from all third countries. At present the frequency rate of physical checks on bovine meat from Brazil is established at 30%, while for bovine minced meat and meat preparations of the same origin it is at 50%, and for poultry meat, meat preparations and meat products it is at 100%.

⁽¹⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2026/996 of 29 April 2026 amending Implementing Regulations (EU) 2020/761 and (EU) 2020/1988 regarding the creation, amendment and management of certain tariff quotas following the Interim Agreement on Trade between the European Union, of the one part, and the common market of the South, the Argentine Republic, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Paraguay and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, of the other part (OJ L, 2026/996, 30.4.2026, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2026/996/oj).

⁽²⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/761 of 17 December 2019 laying down rules for the application of Regulations (EU) No 1306/2013, (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) No 510/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the management system of import tariff quotas with licences (OJ L 185, 12.6.2020, pp. 24-252, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/761/oj).

⁽³⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1988 of 11 November 2020 laying down rules for the application of Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) No 510/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the administration of import tariff quotas in accordance with the 'first come, first served' principle (OJ L 422, 14.12.2020, pp. 4-136, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/1988/oj).

⁽⁴⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2026/184/oj.

⁽⁵⁾ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202600874.

⁽⁶⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2129 of 25 November 2019 establishing rules for the uniform application of frequency rates for identity checks and physical checks on certain consignments of animals and goods entering the Union (OJ L 321 12.12.2019, p. 122).