(English version)

Question for written answer E-001904/26
to the Commission
Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR)
(8 May 2026)

Subject: Contaminated poultry from Brazil and EU food security

Following the Commission's decision to provisionally apply the trade part of the EU-Mercosur agreement, Greece received its first batch of frozen poultry from Brazil. According to the Panhellenic Federation of Public Geotechnical Engineers, around 80% of the samples tested, totalling three tonnes of meat, were contaminated with salmonella and were immediately withdrawn. At the same time, experts are warning that effective control of millions of tonnes of food imported from outside the EU is not possible in practice, pointing to the inadequacy of the control system and the lack of staff in the veterinary services. This means that the Commission is pushing through trade liberalisation with no real way to ensure food security for EU citizens and without guaranteeing fair competition for European farmers.

In this connection:

1. How does the Commission intend to guarantee the health security of EU citizens in the face of increasing food imports from Mercosur countries given the serious health risks already apparent from the first batches of products?

2. Is the Commission considering immediately suspending imports of products of animal origin from establishments and countries where food contamination with dangerous pathogens has been detected, and removing these establishments from the list kept in accordance with Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/405?

3. Why is the Commission pushing through trade liberalisation with countries that do not meet EU sanitary standards, putting European consumers at risk while undermining the competitiveness of EU farmers?

Submitted: 8.5.2026

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(10 July 2026)

The EU import control system operates at several levels. It includes audits in third countries carried out by the Commission to verify that they have control systems in place preventing non-compliant goods from being exported to the EU.

It also provides for mandatory controls carried out by Member States at EU border control posts, including risk-based physical checks (which may include laboratory checks), to detect non-compliances.

In addition, Member States must carry out risk-based controls at any stage of production, processing, distribution and use, including for imported products.

Where specific risks are identified, additional measures are adopted, such as intensified official controls ([1]), or increased frequencies of physical checks at EU border control posts for goods from specific third countries ([2]). Where necessary, the Commission can adopt stricter measures such as restrictions of imports ([3]).

Only third countries which provide guarantees that the animals and goods concerned from that third country comply with the relevant EU requirements are listed in Regulation (EU) 2021/405 ([4]). This act does not contain lists of establishments authorised to export to the EU. Those lists are elaborated by the authorised third countries.

EU food safety rules are the strictest in the world. Furthermore, according to Article 6.6(1) of the EU-Mercosur Agreement ([5]), products imported into the EU from Mercosur countries must comply with those rules.

Also, in line with the Vision for Agriculture and Food ([6]), the Commission is pursuing a stronger alignment of production standards applied to imports, notably on animal welfare and pesticides. Moreover, a dedicated task force is in place to strengthen import controls.

([1]) In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2019/1873: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/1873/oj.
([2]) In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2019/2129: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2019/2129/2021-12-26.
([3]) Based on Regulation (EU) 2017/625: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/625/oj.
([4]) http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2021/405/oj.
([5]) https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/09242a36-a438-40fd-a7af-fe32e36cbd0e/library/cc57df97-5d08-47ed-a509-34cd93405acc/details?download=true.
([6]) COM/2025/75 final.