

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003046/26
to the Commission**

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(17 July 2026)

Subject: Reshoring of the flax sector: industrial and strategic challenges for the EU

The European Union is today the world's largest producer of flax. France alone accounts for around 60% of global production. This crop is a strategic asset for our agriculture and for many rural areas. We have recognised know-how in this sector.

However, a significant proportion of this flax (95% in France) is exported to China, where it is spun and processed before being re-imported into the European market in the form of finished products, in particular clothing, household linen, composite materials and insulation panels.

Much of the added value and jobs associated with processing are thus lost to European producers and industrial firms.

At a time when the European Union is consistently expressing its ambition to strengthen its industry and reshore certain strategic production:

1. Has the Commission assessed the economic and industrial losses associated with exporting of a significant proportion of European flax to China for processing?
2. How does it explain the fact that the EU remains dependent on processing capacities located in China for a fibre for which the Member States account for the bulk of global production?
3. What measures does it intend to take to encourage the development of artisanal and industrial flax spinning and processing activities within the EU?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(3 September 2026)

The Commission has not carried out a dedicated assessment on the economic and industrial impact associated with flax exports.

The EU represents 75-80% of the global long flax fibre production, but its flax spinning capacity declined over recent decades due to higher production costs and global competition.

It still retains about 8% of the global capacity. In the period 2023-2025, the average yearly EU exports were 136 000 tonnes, out of which 108 000 tonnes went to China.

However, demand for high quality natural textile fibres is growing, offering opportunities for the EU flax and linen sector and supporting the return of spinning capacity in the EU.

The development of additional flax spinning and processing capacity in the EU will depend primarily on the emergence of competitive business models and private investment.

In this context, the Commission encourages Member States and regions to make full use of available EU instruments to support innovation, skills, modernisation and value-chain integration.

The future Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027 will offer new opportunities to scale up the competitiveness of European industry, in particular through the proposed European Competitiveness Fund.

The European Regional Development Fund may support regional industrial development.

TCLF SkillBridge is a European initiative funded under the Single Market Programme. The aim is to establish and strengthen Regional Skills Partnerships across Europe in the textile, clothing, leather and footwear sectors.

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

In addition, funding is provided through Horizon Europe to innovative textiles via the European Partnership 'Textiles for the Future' for the period 2025-2027.

The Commission will dedicate EUR 30 million to actions within the scope of the Partnership, while private partners' contribution will match the Union contribution.
