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P-000943/2026

Answer given by Mr Šefčovič
on behalf of the European Commission
(23.4.2026)

The decline of the EU's sugar market is largely due to high production domestically, while imports have dropped drastically. In 2025, the EU also reinstated import quotas for Ukrainian sugar under the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and suspended General Scheme of Preference Plus preferences for Pakistani ethanol. The agreement with Mercosur offers limited concessions on sugar, subject to strict safeguards, and is yet to be applied.

As for the recently concluded EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), negotiations were carried out in full transparency with text proposals and reports having been made publicly available. The Commission maintained regular exchanges with the Council and the European Parliament, as well as with interested stakeholders including the representatives of sugar industry. To mitigate possible market pressure, the Commission has ensured that the most sensitive agricultural products, including sugar, will only have a limited and controlled access to the EU market and will be subject to sustainability conditionalities. Under the EU-Australia FTA, the EU will open a tariff rate quota of 35 000 tonnes of raw sugar cane for refining to be imported duty-free. It is important to note that this represents less than 0.3% of EU sugar consumption.

In addition, the EU can impose safeguard measures in case of a surge in EU agri-food imports from Australia if it causes or threatens to cause a serious injury to EU industry. As an additional layer of protection for farmers, a bilateral safeguard mechanism will be operationalised in a self-standing EU regulation that will ensure swift and effective protections, in the unlikely event of an unforeseen and harmful surge in imports or an undue decrease in prices for EU producers.