

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002199/26
to the Commission
Eric Sargiacomo (S&D)
(1 June 2026)**

Subject: Areas under oilseeds or protein crops eligible for aid

In Article 41 of its proposal for a regulation on national and regional partnership plans, the Commission refers to the memorandum of understanding on Oilseeds, covering areas planted with oilseeds (soya, rape, colza and sunflower), that was signed with the United States in 1992. It also points out that the number of hectares eligible for specific support under the common agricultural policy is capped.

At the same time, the Commission proposes to create, in the common market Organisation Regulation, a protein crop sector (including soya beans) and require producer and interbranch organisations to be recognised in that sector. The objective is ‘the need to reduce the Union dependence on imports for high-quality proteins, and reinforce ... the EU open strategic autonomy’.

1. At a time when EU imports from Brazil now outstrip those from the United States, would it not be appropriate to take diplomatic action to replace the memorandum of understanding with an agreement securing some of the EU’s soya supplies from the United States?
2. Since 1992, the EU’s agricultural area has grown by almost 40% as a result of the enlargements. Have the areas referred to in Article 41 been increased as a result? Which document specifies the areas covered by Article 41?

Submitted: 1.6.2026

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

The Memorandum of Understanding on oilseeds⁽¹⁾, concluded in the context of the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), remains in force as both a bilateral agreement between the European Union and the United States and a multilateral commitment under the WTO, annexed to the EU’s Schedule of Concessions.

Any initiative to replace this agreement would require a Council mandate for negotiating a new bilateral arrangement with the US. Furthermore, it would necessitate a modification of the EU’s WTO Schedule in accordance with Article XXVIII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1947, involving complex negotiations with all WTO Members holding initial negotiating rights or a principal supplying interest in oilseeds to agree on compensatory adjustments.

The areas referred to in Article 41 of the Commission’s proposal⁽²⁾ were initially set at 5 128 million hectares for the then European Community of 12 Member States⁽³⁾.

Following successive enlargements and the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the Union, these areas have been adjusted and currently stand at 7 854 million hectares⁽⁴⁾.

Under the current Common Agricultural Policy, the areas relevant to the Memorandum correspond to those dedicated to soya bean, rapeseed, and sunflower seed production supported by coupled payments.

Under the Voluntary Coupled Support (2015-2022) and the Coupled Income Support (since 2023), these areas have remained stable, accounting for only 13-17% of the EU limit mentioned above.

Therefore, the scope to increase EU protein production remains ample. The Commission will set its vision for the development of this sector in the Protein Plan scheduled for adoption on 1 July 2026.

⁽¹⁾ Memorandum of Understanding between the European Economic Community and the United States of America on oil seeds under GATT, OJ L147, 18.06.1993, p. 26.

⁽²⁾ Proposal for a regulation if the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Fund for economic, social and territorial cohesion, agriculture and rural, fisheries and maritime, prosperity and security for the period 2028-2034 and amending Regulation (EU) 2023/955 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, COM/2025/565 final.

⁽³⁾ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), on the basis of Council Regulation (EEC) n°1765/92 establishing a support system for producers of certain arable crops (OJ L181/12) amended successively by Regulations (EC) n°232/94 and (EC) n°2800/95 (Regulations no longer in force).

⁽⁴⁾ Details on the MoU: Article 11, Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/129 of 21 December 2021 laying down rules for types of intervention concerning oilseeds, cotton and by-products of wine making under Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council and for the information, publicity and visibility requirements relating to Union support and the CAP Strategic Plans.