Question for written answer E-003623/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Standards in respect of the quota of olive oil exempted from customs duties

From 2013, the quota of olive oil exempted from customs duties was increased to 57 400 tonnes per year. This is encouraging European firms to move outside the EU. Furthermore, those firms will have benefited from the 'Green Morocco' action plan (700 hectares on which they would be able to take advantage of daily rates of pay of 6-8 euros) and the 2011-2013 programme for cooperation with Morocco, in addition to EUR 1 330 million in development funding over 10 years. There are 137 companies in Morocco (mainly French and Spanish), representing 29% of agricultural production, 42% of investment, 40% of exports and 28% of jobs.

By 2020 there will be a payment per hectare, and by 2030 we will have a production restriction system based on authorisations. But if the duty-free quota continues to increase, the sector will suffer.

One thing is certain, however: the most serious problem would be the elimination of minimum quality standards for 26 fruit and vegetable crops. This would favour plant health products that are banned in the EU.

1. What steps will the Commission take to stop duty-free products coming in that fail to comply with EU labour and plant health standards?

2. Could the Commission look into the economic and food safety risks of complete liberalisation of a strategic sector such as agriculture?