

**Question for written answer E-004975/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Proposed changes to the annexes to Directive 2000/29/EC on plant health

The Commission has proposed, through an implementing regulation, changes to the annexes to Directive 2000/29/EC on plant health. These changes will considerably weaken checks on citrus imports. Among other things, citrus fruits intended for industrial processing will be subject to fewer checks than fresh produce from countries affected by citrus canker and citrus black spot.

This measure has provoked serious concern in the sector, above all given the large number of cases of black spot disease being detected in citrus fruit from third countries, and owing to the serious damage that the sector could suffer if the disease were to spread to European plantations.

It also seems surprising, bearing in mind the agreement that was recently reached on the new plant health regulation, aimed at stepping up the fight against the spread of diseases from third countries.

Can the Commission explain why it plans to reduce checks? Does it not believe that this step is at odds with the spirit of the new regulation negotiated between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament with the aim of improving checks and preventive measures?