Question for written answer E-004599/2018
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Pressure from Tunisian olive oil in Sicily during the oil production period and pricing phase

There is currently mass importing of Tunisian olive oil in Sicily, which is free from customs duties and at a much lower price (Euro 3-4 per kilo) compared with that offered by local producers (Euro 7-8 per kilo).

This duty-free importing has led to a significant depressive effect on the market at the start of the new oil production period, due to the fact that Tunisian and Sicilian oil are entirely interchangeable, as shown in a recent study by the Tunisian Observatory of Economy (June 2018).

According to this study, imports of olive oil from Tunisia to the EU are strictly and exclusively linked to the quantities produced in Italy and their volatility. The study provides statistical confirmation that the greatest impact is felt in southern Italy.

Can the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1) Does it believe that this competitive pressure, which is also felt by other products, may be considered an unfair commercial practice among companies in the food industry?

2) Does it not believe, considering the fact that the (never applied) protection clauses in the Euro-Mediterranean Agreements provide for a block on trade flows during peak production periods, such massive imports at the start of the oil production phase, with an inevitable depressive effect on the market, should be subject to censure?