Question for written answer E-000268/2019
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Orange production in Spain following the EU-South Africa Free Trade Agreement

Spain is the world's leading exporter of oranges, which also makes it the leading EU exporter of this particular citrus fruit. Oranges are one of Spain's key agricultural products, especially in the autonomous communities of Valencia, Murcia and Andalusia. Market surveillance is essential therefore.

According to estimates by farm organisations in the Autonomous Community of Valencia, the sector is suffering heavy losses in the current marketing year. These losses totalled EUR 130 million by the beginning of December, with 65% (EUR 85 million) of this loss caused by the massive presence on the market of oranges from non-EU countries, and from South Africa in particular, a country with which the European Union signed a Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement in 2016.

Our producers find themselves in a tricky situation, having to compete with non-EU countries whose products are not only sold at a lower price but also pose a high risk of infection from diseases such as black spot. In view of this, the Agreement or the modulation of its effects at regional level must be revised.

1) Will the Commission, therefore, activate the Agreement's safeguard clause?

2) Has the Commission looked into introducing measures to counteract the damage being done and provide compensation for the losses this sector is incurring as a result of the Agreement?