

**Question for written answer E-000403/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Esther Herranz García (PPE), Gabriel Mato (PPE), Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso (PPE), Esteban González Pons (PPE), Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio (PPE), Verónica Lope Fontagné (PPE) and Carlos Coelho (PPE)

Subject: Active substances in imported citrus fruit

A study by the Unió de Llauradors published this week found that 50 active substances banned in the EU were present in citrus fruit imported from South Africa in quantities exceeding the maximum residue level (MRL).

While highlighting again the grievances of EU citrus fruit producers, who cannot employ the same methods for fighting pests and diseases as their competitors and have higher costs as a result, there is also a clear risk for consumers here. The weed-killer Paraquat was one of the substances identified, which in sufficiently high doses can affect the functioning of a number of organs, including the heart and kidneys. Another substance found was azinphos-methyl, a highly toxic insecticide which has been banned in the EU since 2006.

- 1) Given the seriousness of these findings, is the Commission considering suspending imports of citrus fruit from South Africa?
- 2) Does the Commission believe the agreements with South Africa should be reviewed in light of the irregularities constantly being found in recent years in citrus fruit imports?