

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003698/23  
to the Commission  
Clara Aguilera (S&D)  
(18 December 2023)**

*Subject:* Discovery of pest ‘false codling moth’ on fruit from Morocco

In November 2023, the Commission confirmed a first discovery of the pest ‘false codling moth’ (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta*) in a shipment of pomegranates from Morocco, a third country that has, until now, been considered an area free of this quarantine pest.

The false codling moth has a devastating effect on dozens of crops and tree species. Its entry into and spread across the EU would lead to an average decrease of 26% of citrus fruit production. It also causes serious damage to other types of production, such as stone fruit, apple, pear, avocado, vine, olive tree, persimmon, pomegranate, pepper, tomato and aubergine, as well as rose and oak.

Given Morocco’s high volume of fruit and vegetable exports to the EU, especially via Spain, there is a high risk that this pest will implant itself and spread to all types of production that are susceptible to it.

1. What measures is the Moroccan Government taking to tackle this pest?
2. In view of this first discovery, what measures will the Commission take?
3. Has the Commission planned to carry out field inspections to clarify and/or determine the presence of this pest in Morocco and prevent further cases like this?

Submitted:18.12.2023

**Question for written answer E-003735/23  
to the Commission  
Jordi Cañas (Renew)  
(20 December 2023)**

*Subject:* Immediate measures to counter the spread of the ‘false codling moth’ from Morocco

A shipment of pomegranates from Morocco affected by the ‘false codling moth’ (*Thaumatotibia leucotreta*) was recently seized. Morocco had hitherto been considered to be free of this pest. Farmers’ organisations report that the presence of ‘false codling moths’ can lead to a very dangerous infestation liable to spread rapidly and devastate a wide variety of crops <sup>(1)</sup>.

Given the high volume of fruit and vegetable exports from Morocco to the EU, especially via Spain, there is a serious risk that this pest will implant itself and spread throughout Europe. Its introduction to and spread in the EU would cause the loss of 26% of citrus fruit yield on average and seriously damage other crops <sup>(2)</sup>.

In light of the above:

1. Given the extremely serious risk to plant health posed by this pest, will the Commission open an investigation without delay to ascertain the true extent of the threat? What measures does it intend to take to prevent this pest from reaching Europe?
2. If the presence of the ‘false codling moth’ in Morocco is confirmed, will it hold the Moroccan Government to account for failing to notify it or take any preventive measures?

Submitted:20.12.2023

**Joint answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission  
(23 February 2024)**

The Commission communicated with Morocco, expressing its concerns about the non-compliance of a consignment of pomegranates due to the presence of *Thaumatotibia leucotreta*.

<sup>(1)</sup> <https://castellonaldia.elmundo.es/economia/alarma-extrema-tras-detectar-europa-la-plaga-de-la-falsa-polilla-en-un-cargamento-de-granadas-marroquies-IH17893685>

<sup>(2)</sup> <https://agronoma.sevilla.abc.es/noticias/agricultura/la-letal-plaga-mas-cerca-detectan-la-falsa-polilla-en-un-cargamento-de-fruta-procedente-de-marruecos/>

The Commission requested Morocco to investigate the non-compliance, provide a report on the outcome of its investigations, any corrective actions taken or planned to prevent a recurrence, relevant surveys or other activities, and an official communication by Morocco on the status of the pest in the country.

Morocco informed that *Thaumotobia leucotreta* is a regulated quarantine pest in Morocco, that it carried out investigations, both of which did not reveal the presence of the pest and confirmed the absence of the pest in its territory.

Given the absence of any additional non-compliances, the Commission requested Member States to remain vigilant in their import controls of relevant host commodities originating from Morocco.

The Commission together with the Member States will follow closely the implementation by Morocco of the relevant EU import requirements for *Thaumotobia leucotreta*.

The decision on the pest status in an area is the exclusive competence of the respective National Plant Protection Organisation, as laid down by the relevant international standards of the International Plant Protection Convention.

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