

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0339/08

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to the Commission

Subject: Export duties and tax refunds for raw materials in trading partners

A number of our trading partners apply export duties on raw materials and grant tax refunds for processed products based on domestic raw materials. As this practice is justified for the least developed countries, it can be seen as distorting trade with all the other countries.

1. Can the Commission indicate which countries apply those export duties and tax refunds? What levels of export duties on raw materials and tax refunds are applied?
2. Does the Commission provide information on the effects of those practices for imports of raw materials into the EU? What is the effect on import prices of the various raw materials? How is the competitiveness of European industry affected?
3. Does the Commission consider these practices as trade distorting? Are there cases where these practices are justified? Which criteria does the Commission apply for their judgement?
4. Are these practices addressed in the negotiations on free trade agreements? Does the Commission expect any improvements in access to raw materials for European producers via the future FTAs?
5. How is the Commission seeking to improve the situation for imports of raw materials?
6. Does the Commission envisage any strategic partnership with other industrialised countries vis-à-vis countries exporting raw materials?