

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2308/08
by Ioannis Gklavakis (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Discrimination against Community fruit and vegetable exporters by supermarket chains in the EU

During the previous marketing years of 2006 and 2007, and on the pretext of protecting the health of consumers, some EU supermarkets importing fresh fruit and vegetables of Community origin made unreasonable and unscientific demands concerning detectable pesticide residues. In particular, these demands included setting an arbitrary maximum number of detectable residues of active substances in imported fruit and vegetables of Community origin, which is at variance with the limits set by Community legislation (Directive 91/414/EEC)¹. Moreover, the corresponding products imported from third countries (e.g. Morocco, Chile, etc.) are not subject to the same restrictions. The result of this situation is that exportable Community produce suffers unfair competition, which is ultimately detrimental to European producers and exporters. In view of the fundamental importance of fresh fruit and vegetable exports to the EU economy and the fact that the new marketing year has begun, will the Commission say:

1. how it intends to respond to the arbitrary actions of supermarket chains which impose unilateral restrictions on Community exports, in violation of any notion of competition, and
2. what measures it will take to provide the consuming public with correct information on food safety, which is jeopardised by the arbitrary actions of certain individuals?

¹ OJ L 230, 19.8.1991, p. 1.