

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1415/10  
by Carmen Fraga Estévez (PPE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Economic Partnership Agreements with the Pacific states: effects on the Community Canning Industry

By virtue of the Economic Partnership Agreements, the Pacific states are exempt from the rules of origin for headings 1604 and 1605; this mainly affects canned and prepared tuna, which is a sensitive product as far as the Community sector is concerned.

At present, in keeping with the Interim Agreement, only Papua New Guinea and Fiji benefit from this concession, since they are the only countries which have signed it. However, the rest of the Pacific states could take advantage of this measure if they sign up to this Agreement, or when the full-blown Economic Partnership Agreement is concluded.

1. What mechanisms does the Commission use to ensure strict regulation and monitoring of the application of this exemption, and what funds are allocated to this, in order to check whether the concession really achieves the objectives provided for in the Agreements, and were the reason for granting the concession in the first place?
2. Has the Commission carried out a genuine, updated study of the effect that this concession could have on the whole tuna industry, both in the Community and in the ACP-SPG+, in order to avoid overturning the balance of the world tuna market? Did the Commission carry out a prior consultation of the Community tuna industry with regard to this?
3. Does the Commission plan to establish mechanisms to protect the Community tuna industry from concessions of this kind to third countries, which are to the detriment of the Community industry? If so, what are these mechanisms?
4. Is the Commission aware that agreements of this kind jeopardise thousands of workers' livelihoods in EU convergence regions and/or areas heavily dependent on fisheries, and that once these workers are thrown out of the labour market, it will be very difficult for them to get back into it?