

**Question for written answer E-010296/2012  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
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Subject: Sustainable support for EU bananas and tropical crops

In order to use sustainable or organic production methods for bananas in humid tropical areas, producers need to have access to a plethora of products in order to combat major fungal diseases such as black leaf streak.

EU health and plant health legislation means that EU banana producers cannot fight these diseases in the same way as their counterparts elsewhere. Instead, in order to cut pesticide use, they have to resort to mechanical techniques, leave land fallow, use plants produced *in vitro* or cover plants, and practice selective plant breeding.

Banana producers in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru, however, use products that are not type-approved in Spain or France. Given the limited prospects of making inroads into the EU market, the companies that manufacture these products are not interested in applying for type-approval.

Yeast, which is used to make beer and bread and therefore poses no risk to health, could be used prevent diseases that cause storage decay.

The EU's tropical crops in general are affected by this unfair competition from non-EU countries in tropical regions. With this in mind we welcome POSEI (the programme of options specifically relating to the outermost regions and islands), which is helping to mitigate the effects of this unfair competition.

- POSEI has been allocated EUR 40 million, but can this at least be maintained so as to hold on to the EU's sustainable banana model, with one job per hectare for banana plantations in particular and for the EU's tropical crops in general?
- What steps might be envisaged in order to help establish type-approval for methods to combat the major fungal and storage diseases, with a view to ensuring that EU producers have access to prevention methods that are similar to or more environmentally friendly than those used by their competitors in South America or Africa?
- What production conditions would need to be met in order for bananas to be certified as organic?
- Type-approval for plant health products is currently specific to the crop, product and usage involved. It is therefore impossible to grow field tomatoes on a systematic basis in the French overseas departments, and papayas are no longer grown in Reunion. Would there be any scope for authorising the transfer of type-approval from one crop to another, once type-approval had been granted for the product in question?