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Answer given by Mr Andriukaitis
on behalf of the Commission
(7.6.2017)

The Commission is closely following the investigations of the Brazilian Federal Police in order to take all necessary measures to protect the health of European citizens.

According to EU legislation¹, all consignments of imported meat and meat products from Brazil are systematically subject to veterinary checks at the EU border inspection posts. Any unfavourable result triggers an immediate and automatic mechanism subjecting all consignments of the same product from the same establishment to a reinforcement of controls, a measure aimed at ensuring the safety of imports.

As soon as details of the operation emerged, the establishments implicated in the fraud were removed from the list approved for export to the EU. All consignments from such establishments arriving in the EU were destroyed or returned to Brazil. In addition, Member States are carrying out reinforced physical controls and laboratory checks on all meat consignments from Brazil and the Commission performed audits in Brazil (2-12 May 2017).

The Commission and the Member States will assess whether further measures are necessary in the light of the outcome of the reinforced checks and of the audit, while also taking into account the evolution of the situation and the response of the Brazilian authorities to the demands for corrective measures.

As regards the ongoing negotiations with Mercosur, it should be stressed that the EU does not authorise imports of agri-food products if they do not meet the EU's high safety requirements. The intention, however, is for the agreement to provide for enhanced cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary matters.

¹ Council Directive 97/78/EC of 18 December 1997 laying down the principles governing the organisation of veterinary checks on products entering the Community from third countries, OJ L 24, 30.1.1998, p. 9–30.