

**Question for written answer E-003623/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Mara Bizzotto (ID)

Subject: Endangered Italian processed tomato industry and increasing imports from China. Call for urgent intervention by the Commission

The Corriere della Sera Dataroom study by journalists Milena Gabanelli and Francesco Tordi entitled 'Tomatoes: how Made in Italy excellence is being destroyed'¹ highlights the problems being faced by the Italian processed tomato industry.

In Italy, tomatoes for the processing industry are grown in the provinces of Piacenza, Ferrara, Parma, Mantua, Foggia, Caserta and Potenza, but from 2015 to 2020 tomato-growing areas were reduced to 65 600 hectares, with a loss of 8 000 hectares.

Conversely, imports of tomato products from China to Italy have increased exponentially, reaching 68 600 tonnes in 2020 – almost twice as high as in 2018.

The more than 8 000 Italian producers report that the price of tomatoes fixed for the 2021 marketing year does not cover production costs, which have increased due to the COVID emergency.

Large retailers determine the price of raw materials and processed products, which means that the 115 Italian canning companies often sell at prices that are lower than the cost of production.

Given China's growing influence on the Italian agri-food sector, the increase in imports of Chinese tomatoes of poor quality and production standards below those of Europe, can the Commission answer the following questions:

1. How does it intend to protect Italian producers and companies trading in peeled tomatoes, tomato purée and tomato pulp from increasing Chinese competition?
2. Will it step up controls on imports into Europe of tomato products from China?

¹ <https://www.corriere.it/dataroom-milena-gabanelli/pomodoro-come-si-distrugge-eccellenza-made-in-italy-sequestri-prezzi-ribasso-importazioni-cina-guadagno/ffb1731a-d378-11eb-8dcd-923bd7ac4a6d-va.shtml>