

**Question for written answer E-001112/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Spanish-Moroccan trade of Western Saharan phosphorus and phosphates

The EU has increased its imports of Moroccan phosphorus since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and Morocco currently accounts for 50 % of Europe's phosphate imports<sup>1</sup>. The Union abides by Article 24 of UN position 2002/161 of 12 February 2002.

During the first quarter of 2022, Morocco's state-owned OCP mining and fertiliser production group recorded a turnover of EUR 24 billion, up by 77 % compared to last year, and stated that production could increase by 50 % over the next four years<sup>2</sup>. One of the biggest mines in Western Sahara, Bou Craa, is controlled by Morocco, a country that possesses almost 70 % of the planet's known phosphorus reserves<sup>3</sup>.

Spain unilaterally recognised Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara in 2022, with dire consequences both for the human rights of Saharawis and for European small and medium-sized enterprises<sup>4</sup>. A number of Spanish companies are embedded throughout the Western Saharan phosphorus supply chain, ranging from a prime infrastructure builder in Bou Craa<sup>5</sup>, to the law firm of a former foreign affairs minister that helps to justify the trade by providing lobbying services<sup>6</sup>.

1. Will the Commission widen the scope of the Conflict Minerals Regulation<sup>7</sup> to include imports of Western Saharan phosphates?
2. Will it propose diversification strategies for the Union's use of phosphorus and phosphates<sup>8</sup>?
3. Will it implement the rulings of cases T-344/19, T-356/19 and T-279/19?

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<sup>1</sup> Spain, Italy and France account for over three quarters of the Union's imports of phosphorus within fertiliser products.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/europe-searches-for-alternatives-in-fertiliser-supply-battle/>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/03/06/phosphorus-saved-our-way-of-life-and-now-threatens-to-end-it>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003260\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003260_EN.html).

<sup>5</sup> [https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/wsrw/feature-images/File/157/6081d8e0f3bcb\\_Pforplunder2021\\_Web.pdf](https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/wsrw/feature-images/File/157/6081d8e0f3bcb_Pforplunder2021_Web.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <https://wsrw.org/en/news/the-phosphate-exports>.

<sup>7</sup> [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/conflict-minerals-regulation\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/development-and-sustainability/conflict-minerals-regulation_en).

<sup>8</sup> Such as wastewater management techniques.