

**Question for written answer E-001273/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Thierry Mariani (ID)

Subject: Consequences for European food security of a total ban on Belarusian potash imports

Potash is one of three crucial nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) used to maximise crop yields. Half of the world's population is fed with food grown using artificial fertilisers¹.

In 2021, the EU imposed restrictions on Belarus that excluded some 20% of potash from trade with the EU. In March 2022, a new package of sanctions led to a total ban on potash imports².

Between 2018 and 2020, 27% of the potash imported into the EU originated in Belarus³.

The EU suffers from a serious shortage of this commodity, producing as it does only 8% of the world's potash⁴.

The increasing price of fertilisers (prices have been multiplied by a factor of 3 to 5⁵) gives rise to higher costs for farmers and an even greater increase in food prices. As such, inflation in supermarket prices jumped to 19.8% in February 2023⁶.

1. Does the Commission consider that the sanctions are driving up the costs of production for farmers, and therefore causing higher food prices?
2. What strategies does it intend to adopt to help European farmers, who have already been hard hit by energy price rises and now have a new threat to deal with?

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¹ <https://www.fertilizerseurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Industry-Facts-and-Figures-2021-1.pdf>

² <https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/eu-sanctions-on-belarus-target-key-fertiliser-amid-rising-input-prices/>

³ <https://www.fertilizerseurope.com/fertilizers-in-europe/facts-figures/>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://www.lesoir.be/478414/article/2022-11-21/le-cout-fulgurant-des-engrais-tracasse-la-commission-europeenne>

⁶ <https://www.lecho.be/economie-politique/belgique/economie/apres-l-energie-le-prix-des-produits-alimentaires-est-en-forte-hausse/10451115.html>