

**Question for written answer E-002658/2023  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Jordi Cañas** (Renew)

**Subject:** Imports of citrus fruit from South Africa are breaching the EU's plant health rules

Agricultural organisations in the EU have reported that imports of citrus fruits from South Africa containing harmful organisms have tripled since 2022. In the first half of 2022, 12 consignments of citrus fruit were intercepted that were contaminated with *Phyllosticta citricarpa*, a fungus that causes citrus black spot disease. Some 37 consignments contaminated with the fungus have been detected so far this year<sup>1</sup>.

The current EU rules on plant health aim to protect European agriculture and forestry by preventing the entry and spread of pests and diseases. Despite this, however, the Commission continues to allow products to enter the EU from countries that repeatedly fail to comply with plant health requirements, putting the European agricultural sector and food safety in the EU at risk.

In light of the above:

1. What steps does the Commission propose to put an end to this situation? Will imports be temporarily suspended from countries – such as South Africa – that cannot guarantee they have taken the plant health measures requested by the EU?
2. Given the failure to control citrus fruit pests in countries outside the EU, how can EU citizens be assured that the non-EU citrus fruit they consume in their homes does not pose a risk to their health?

Submitted: 14.9.2023

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abc.es/espana/comunidad-valenciana/exigen-suspender-importaciones-citricos-sudafrica-presencia-mancha-20230911170230-nt.html>