Question for written answer E-002873/2023
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: EU sugar market and supply chain impacts

In its sugar balance sheet for the 2022/2023 marketing year, the Commission estimates sugar production at 14.66 million tonnes. It puts demand for sugar for food purposes and exports of processed food at 16.2 million tonnes. The supply shortfall is expected to be made up by imports totalling 2.2 million tonnes. Area under cultivation has fallen for the fifth year in a row and now stands at 1.338 million ha. By contrast, the ‘EU Agricultural Outlook For the EU Agricultural Markets and Income 2017-2030’ had assumed, for the long term, a much greater area under cultivation and much higher production. Instead of being a net exporter of sugar, as had been assumed, the EU is now a net importer.

1. What have been the causes of this steady decline in sugar beet planting and sugar production, how will costs and risks for farmers evolve in the future, and can beet growers benefit in an appropriate way from the current record prices?

2. Will the EU remain a net sugar importer in the long term, and what is the assessment of long-term demand in the EU (its own demand plus growing exports of processed food, e.g. confectionery or jam)?

3. How can the large price gap between the EU and the world market since the end of 2022 be explained, and what is the market situation for the 2023/2024 marketing year?

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