

**Question for written answer E-000329/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Farmers' protests and the EU's policy response

Farmers' protests against rising costs in the agricultural sector and falling prices for their produce are spreading across the EU.

The Commission's reaction to the protests in late January was to propose to allow Member States to extend by one more year the derogation of good agricultural and environmental conditions (GAEC) standard 8 on devoting a minimum share of arable land to non-productive areas or features. That means that the only policy response from the Commission so far has been a further weakening of the environmental rules that are key to encouraging biodiversity and protecting soil health.

However, the underlying causes of farmers' intense unease go beyond their need for more flexibility in environmental rules. Mounting debt, extreme weather events, and especially pressure from retailers and agrochemical companies, as well as foreign imports in the context of EU free-trade deals, are key concerns for the sector.

1. In the light of this, is the Commission reconsidering its trade policy and in particular the process to finalise the Association Agreement with Mercosur?
2. Would the Commission consider anticipating the evaluation of Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain¹ and assessing its revision before 2025?

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¹ OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59.