

ORAL QUESTION H-0690/08
for Question Time at the part-session in September II 2008
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure
by Johan Van Hecke
to the Commission

Subject: EU banana tariff cuts

Banana producers in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries fear the attempts by Latin American growers to obtain cuts in European Union import tariffs for their fruit. Ecuador, the world number one banana exporter, wants to restart talks with the EU in October. The banana deal on the table would have cut EU import tariffs of EUR 176 (140 pounds) per tonne of bananas to EUR 114 by 2016.

ACP banana producers fear that they will be squeezed out of the European market if the EU tariffs are lowered. Latin American bananas are not only cheaper, they benefit from government subsidies. Though ACP countries produce only 0.9 million tonnes of the 17 million tonnes of bananas sold on the world market, local economies depend on banana exports for income and jobs.

Does the Commission take the fears of the ACP countries seriously, and will they be taken into consideration during the talks with Ecuador and other future talks on banana tariffs?

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