

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0333/07  
by Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE-DE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of frozen strawberries from China

Following the complaint lodged on 5 December 2005 by the Polish Refrigeration Industry Union and the launch of proceedings, the Commission imposed a provisional anti-dumping duty on Chinese frozen strawberry imports. The proceedings demonstrated that the majority of Chinese firms employ dishonest trade practices such as the export of goods at prices that do not cover production costs. The drastic rise in Chinese imports (e.g. from 8 941 tonnes in 2002 to 37 903 tonnes in 2003) has damaged Community strawberry production and led to a fall in prices, which in turn has contributed to a loss of profitability in the EU's frozen strawberry sector as a whole. In Poland alone, 100 000 farms are involved in commercial strawberry production and this activity is often their main source of income. The yearly rise in the influx of frozen strawberries from China threatens producers and growers not only in Poland but also in Spain and Italy, where there have also been production and export losses. It should be stressed that anti-dumping measures in no way restrict imports at fair prices. Instead, they can ensure fair competition on the frozen strawberry market for Community firms.

By introducing anti-dumping duties, including on frozen strawberries imported onto Community territory, the Union is sending a clear signal that dishonest trade practices are unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly. Trade rules should be the same for everyone. It is difficult to speak of fair competition when producers in some countries are required to comply with certain standards, concerning employment law and social and environmental protection, for example, and others are able to ignore these requirements. I am convinced that in order to protect Community growers and jobs, and to ensure fair competition, a definitive anti-dumping duty should be imposed on frozen strawberries from China. It is in the economic interests of the whole Union. The continuation of imports at dumping prices could destroy Community strawberry production, which, in turn, would result in the processing industry's permanent dependence on imports from third countries. The breakdown of Community production would mean that strawberry prices would rise in the longer term.

Does the Commission agree that any breach of the rules of fair competition by third countries should be dealt with appropriately? Will the Commission adopt an affirmative position on the introduction of a definitive anti-dumping duty on imports of frozen strawberries from Chinese exporters using dishonest practices and, in so doing, protect Union growers and their families?