

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1889/08
by Fernando Fernández Martín (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: The situation with regard to tomato production in the Canary Islands

The tomato production and export sector in the Canary Islands finds itself in a serious situation which threatens its survival. Current tomato production represents 24.7% of the archipelago's agricultural production, and employs 27 000 people, 12 000 of them directly in farming, and 15 000 indirectly. In 2001-2002, the Canary Islands exported 241 840 260 net kilos of tomatoes, equivalent to over 40 million in unit/bunch terms, for a total of 2630 hectares under cultivation. As a result of the advent of the so-called 'spoon virus', these figures have fallen spectacularly: production for 2006-2007 fell to 171 114 448 net kilos, equivalent to 28 million in unit/bunch terms, from a total of 1943 hectares under cultivation. Using such possibilities as POSEICAN offers, the region's government has taken some measures to mitigate the situation, but these have not been enough to resolve the problem.

What information does the Commission have on the tomato sector crisis in the Canary Islands, an ultraperipheral region of the EU, and what measures does it think could be taken in order to maintain tomato production as a going concern and thus save the 27 000 jobs involved?