

**Question for written answer P-002277/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Esther Herranz García (PPE)

Subject: Imports of contaminated citrus fruit from South Africa

On 21 February 2014, EFSA released a report warning of the high risk that European citrus groves could become infected with a disease caused by the fungus *Guignardia citricarpa* (Black Spot), which had been found in imports from South Africa. EFSA considers that the palliative measures taken by South Africa to date have been ineffective. A total of 35 contaminated shipments from South Africa were intercepted last season, which is far above the threshold of five interceptions that the Commission had set as the trigger for adopting safeguard measures. Nevertheless, the Commission did not intervene to stop imports from South Africa until the end of the season, which must be interpreted as a merely symbolic step without any practical effect.

What measures will the Commission take to prevent this disease spreading to European citrus trees next season? Does the Commission not believe that the borders need to be shut in time to ensure that the European sector is not affected by this disease? Does the Commission not consider it appropriate to demand that the South African authorities carry out more comprehensive checks on citrus exports to the EU?