

Question for written answer E-016081/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
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Subject: Illegal imports of olive oil from third countries

The European Union has given developing countries in the Mediterranean, such as Tunisia and Morocco, the right to export olive oil duty-free to EU countries. The aim of this policy is to support the economies of these countries through the liberalisation of trade in products that enjoy a competitive advantage, such as agricultural products.

However, many olive oil producers in southern European countries (Greece, Spain, and Italy) are concerned that there is a risk of uncontrolled imports of olive oil from other third countries. If this happens, both European and Moroccan and Tunisian olive growers will suffer and the only ones who will benefit will be the lobbies of illegal olive oil imports. That these fears are justified is evidenced by the fact that a few days ago the Italian authorities dismantled a network illegally importing 7 000 tonnes of mixed olive oil originating from Morocco, Tunisia and Syria, which would have been marketed as 100% extra virgin.

In view of the above, will the Commission say:

1. How does it intend to protect the income of European olive oil producers from gangs illegally importing olive oil from third countries via Tunisia and Morocco?
2. Will it introduce compulsory molecular controls on imports of olive oil from Morocco and Tunisia in order to verify that the products concerned genuinely originate from these countries?