

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development  
The Chair

02.12.2025

Mr Bernd Lange  
Chair  
Committee on International Trade  
BRUSSELS

**Subject:** Opinion on the Proposal for a Regulation implementing the bilateral safeguard clause of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement and the EU-Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement for agricultural products (COM(2025)0639 – C10-0247/2025 – 2025/0322(COD))

Dear Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI Committee) has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee on the proposal for a Regulation. By written procedure launched on 24 November 2025, the AGRI coordinators decided, as there were no other possibilities to meet the very tight deadline, to send the opinion in the form of a letter. While fully respecting the outcome of the competence discussions settled by the CoP, AGRI Committee nevertheless notes that the decision was taken entirely in favour of the Committee on International Trade (INTA) and that, in this context, AGRI was requested to issue its opinion on a proposal that has a clear agricultural dimension.

The AGRI Committee discussed the matter at its meeting of 1 December and subsequently adopted the opinion on 2 December 2025 and asks the INTA Committee, as the responsible committee, to take the following points into account when preparing its report on the proposed Regulation, without assuming competence over an issue that directly concerns the future of European farmers. The AGRI Committee also wishes to express its concern regarding the accelerated handling of this file, which places considerable pressure on Parliament's normal procedures and did not allow AGRI Committee to consider or vote on an opinion under rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure.

The AGRI Committee:

1. Stresses that the European agricultural sector stands to be disproportionately affected by the EU-Mercosur Agreement (Agreement); shares concerns expressed by European farmers and wider society about negative repercussions in the EU market, arising from increased imports from Mercosur countries, in particular for sensitive agricultural sectors such as beef, pork, poultry, sugar, maize, honey and certain fruits; stresses that significant differences in production costs, stemming from lower environmental, animal

welfare and labour standards in Mercosur countries, create unfair competitive pressure for EU producers operating under higher cost base and standards and more ambitious rules;

2. Underlines that the Commission anticipates a significant impact on EU agriculture, as demonstrated by its proposal for a EUR 1 billion support fund for farmers affected by tariff reductions; expects the Commission to ensure additional resources to supplement the support fund where necessary; stresses the need for a fully operational, enforceable and timely safeguard mechanism before entry into force of the Interim Agreement;
3. Underscores that the effects of the surge in agricultural imports from Mercosur countries will generate asymmetric effects across the Union, disproportionately impacting Member States with structural vulnerabilities such as smaller or less productive farm sizes, weaker bargaining power within food supply chains, high rural employment dependence on agriculture and limited administrative capacity to implement rapid support measures;
4. Notes with serious concern that the proposed safeguard mechanisms lack automatic triggering, have volume-based triggers set too high, provide insufficient monitoring detail and rely on lengthy investigative procedures ill-suited to the agricultural sector; is also concerned that the onerous criteria set out in Article 3, including the requirement to demonstrate detailed market trends over 36 months, may discourage legitimate investigation requests; highlights the weakness of the proposed safeguards, and questions their credibility and enforceability given the difficulty of their effective implementation and monitoring;
5. Regrets that the proposal restricts safeguard measures to tariff suspension or reintroduction; notes that in cases of acute or structural market disruption the Union should, where strictly necessary and proportionate, be able to temporarily suspend preferential imports of specific products;
6. Expresses concern that reference prices used as benchmarks in sensitive sectors such as beef are outdated; calls for their systematic revision and regular adjustment to reflect current market conditions if they are to serve as credible triggers for safeguard action;
7. Insists on the inclusion of a clear reciprocity clause making explicit that safeguard measures may be applied or maintained where imports benefiting from preferential treatment do not comply with equivalent on-farm production, animal welfare and sanitary and phytosanitary standards; notes that without such a clause, the safeguard regime cannot ensure a genuine level playing field;
8. Emphasises the ongoing risk of environmental and social dumping, including the use of pesticides, antibiotics as well as other products or production methods banned or tightly restricted in the EU, persistent deforestation, and structural labour-rights deficiencies; stresses that this disparity threatens EU food sovereignty, a central pillar of the EU's strategic autonomy, and the credibility of EU trade policy; warns that limited traceability and insufficiently transparent supply-chain information undermine the ability of EU authorities to verify compliance, potentially allowing prohibited production methods to enter the market undetected, thereby undermining consumer confidence and fair competition;

9. Urges the Commission to carry out **frequent unannounced inspections** in Mercosur countries in order to verify the use of prohibited substances, preventing deforestation-linked imports, and ensuring full traceability of products entering the Union market; requests that findings be included in the annual report on safeguard implementation;
10. Highlights farmers' and consumers' concerns regarding ineffective and insufficient **border controls** and inadequate traceability of imported agricultural products, particularly beef and poultry, which limits the EU's ability to verify their safety, origin, deforestation-free production, and conformity with applicable sanitary and sustainability requirements;
11. Underlines that biannual monitoring, as proposed, is insufficient for highly volatile and regionally differentiated agricultural markets; calls for at least quarterly monitoring and publication of import volumes and price data for all sensitive products, with adequate regional disaggregation to detect geographically concentrated effects;
12. Is concerned that exemptions granted to **Paraguay** could incentivise trade re-routing and circumvention of the Regulation; calls therefore for the introduction of a specific anti-circumvention article, strengthened customs cooperation, robust verification of rules of origin and full traceability of imports to prevent the channelling of products via Paraguay;
13. Warns that the **cumulative impact** of increased imports, insufficiently effective non-automatic safeguards, and limited sustainability requirements may undermine EU food security, market resilience, generational renewal and the socio-economic cohesion of rural areas, worsening the already declining number of livestock in the Union and resulting in further farm closures, job losses and long-term decline in the agricultural capacity within the Union, thereby running counter to the Union's stated objectives on food sovereignty;
14. Underlines that uncertainty surrounding the functioning of the safeguard mechanism, combined with **unclear threshold operationalisation and legal ambiguities**, raises **serious concerns about its effectiveness and its ability to counteract** the negative effects of increased imports from the Mercosur bloc; stresses that such concerns are compounded by the fact that these clauses appear insufficient, inconsistent and potentially impracticable;
15. Notes, that given the **perishability and seasonality** of agricultural products, procedural timelines are critical; considers that investigations lasting up to nine months are incompatible with the need to prevent lasting damage to farming communities; calls for a maximum investigation period of three months for sensitive products, and for the Commission to be required to initiate an investigation within 15 days of a trigger event;
16. Highlights that existing and future EU support measures are deemed insufficient to alleviate persistent structural challenges or compensate for recurring market disruptions that may stem from the Agreement; calls on the Commission to reinforce EU financial instruments and ensure timely, accessible **compensation**;

17. Calls on the Commission to establish clearer economic indicators to assess “serious injury”, as current criteria lack precision;
18. Notes that safeguards alone are insufficient to address the competitive pressures arising from the Agreement, highlights the need to strengthen internal market-stabilization and crisis-management instruments, including the agricultural reserve, sector-specific safety nets and targeted support measures for the most affected small and medium-sized farms and vulnerable rural regions; stresses that those instruments should operate on an autonomous basis and remain independent from the general EU budget so as to ensure their function as predictable and clearly identifiable safety nets;
19. Urges the Commission to halve the thresholds for demonstrating prima facie evidence of serious injury by reducing required increases in import volumes and decreases in import prices, while also removing the obligation to compare import and domestic prices;
20. Calls on strengthening the proposed Regulation by extending the transition period, introducing an automatic activation mechanism, significantly lowering the safeguard activation thresholds, decoupling the cumulative trigger of requiring both import increases and simultaneous price decreases, and allowing for market disturbances themselves to constitute grounds for triggering the mechanism; further calls for halving the investigation timelines, simplifying the criteria for initiating an investigation; extending the provisional safeguard application period, enhancing product-specific monitoring and increasing its frequency to monthly or bi-monthly intervals with clear regional breakdowns, improving traceability requirements, and ensuring that any sustainability-related non-compliance can trigger immediate and proportionate remedial measures; underlines that monitoring must be supported by robust border checks conducted pursuant to Articles 47 to 54 of Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
21. Calls for a greater involvement of regions in preparing monitoring reports and for systematic information to the European Parliament on all investigations and corrective measures;
22. Welcomes that any Member State, association or representative of the Union industry may request initiation or extension of safeguard measures, provided evidence is available;
23. Reminds that Member States may lack the necessary administrative capacity to effectively monitor local market disturbances and to provide the detailed evidence required for the Commission to trigger a safeguard clause or to open an investigation; considers therefore that, cooperation and data exchange should be strengthened not only between the Commission and the Member States, but also horizontally, among Member States themselves, in particular to address cross-border market disturbances and to ensure a more consistent and timely detection of risks;
24. Reiterates its support for an ambitious and rules-based trade policy, but stresses that such policy must be coherent with aims of other EU policies - particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and environmental policy - that protect the Union’s agricultural interests, and ensure a level playing field for European farmers and rural

communities; acknowledges the opportunities offered by the Agreement for some sectors of the European economy; underlines nonetheless that trade policy must safeguard the Union's food security and must not undermine the objectives set out in Article 39 Treaty on Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) nor compromise the integrity of the internal market under Articles 114 and 169 TFEU;

25. Encourages the Commission to move towards the creation of a European Import Control Office, which would help to coordinate and standardise inspection capacities, data exchange and risk-based approaches across the Union;

Yours sincerely,

Veronika VRECIKOVÁ

**ANNEX: AGRI Amendments to the Regulation**

Agence Europe