

To

Ms Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Cc:

President of the European Council António Costa

Commissioner for Trade Maroš Šefčovič

Commissioner for Agriculture Christophe Hansen

EP Rapporteur (INTA) Gabriel Mato

Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the European Union Christina Rafti

Subject: Appeal for restoring the European Parliament's position in the regulation implementing the EU–Mercosur bilateral safeguard clause for agricultural products (2025/0322(COD))

Dear Madam President,

On behalf of citizens concerned with the genuine protection of European agriculture and fair competition in international trade, I am addressing you with an urgent and firm appeal to ensure that the final wording of the regulation implementing the EU–Mercosur bilateral safeguard clause for agricultural products reflects the position adopted by the European Parliament at its plenary session on 16 December 2025 under procedure 2025/0322(COD) — in particular by reinstating the key amendment establishing a reciprocity mechanism, tabled among others by MEP Krzysztof Hetman (EPP).

The reciprocity mechanism is the foundation of fair competition. Since farmers and businesses in the EU bear the costs of complying with high standards (environmental, animal welfare, health, food safety and labour protection), products benefiting from tariff preferences must be subject to equivalent requirements — and when credible evidence shows that this is not the case, the Commission must be obliged to initiate proceedings and apply safeguard measures. Political declarations and general announcements of control activities are valuable, but they cannot replace binding provisions in the text of the regulation.

By expressing the will of millions of European farmers, the European Parliament clearly stated that the safeguard mechanism must be fast, predictable and effective — so that in the event of a sudden surge in imports or a drop in prices, a real response is possible before the damage becomes irreversible.

However, the preliminary trilogue conclusions of 17 December 2025 — according to publicly available information — weaken several solutions adopted by Parliament, including by raising the activation thresholds to 8%, extending deadlines (e.g. 21 days for provisional measures), and replacing binding rules with soft-law approaches (e.g. declarations).

In light of the above, I call for the unequivocal reinstatement in the regulation of the solutions adopted by the European Parliament — in the wording approved by Parliament — particularly in the following areas:

1. Reciprocity as a binding rule, not a declaration

– reinstating in the regulation the reciprocity (mirror) mechanism under which the Commission is obliged to initiate proceedings and apply safeguard measures when credible evidence shows that imports benefiting from tariff preferences do not meet requirements equivalent to those imposed on EU producers (including in the areas of environment, animal welfare, health, food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, and labour protection).

2. Activation thresholds for the safeguard mechanism: 5%, not 8%

- returning to the thresholds set by the European Parliament — 5% (based on the three-year average) as a clear trigger for swift activation of the safeguard procedure. Raising the threshold to 8% significantly delays the response and increases the socio-economic cost of a market crisis before the mechanism becomes operational.

3. Time of reaction in urgent cases: 14 days, not 21 days

- reinstating the shorter deadline for adopting provisional measures for sensitive products — a maximum of 14 days from the initiation of proceedings. In real market conditions, a one-week difference may determine permanent losses that can no longer be reversed.

4. Shorter, genuinely protective procedural deadlines: 3 months, and 2 months for sensitive products

- returning to the Parliament's approach, which shortens proceedings: generally to 3 months, and for sensitive products — with a target of 2 months for a final decision. Extending deadlines weakens the deterrent effect of the instrument and reduces its effectiveness.

5. Monitoring and reporting: mandatory every 3 months, not “at least every 6 months”

- reinstating the obligation of quarterly monitoring and reporting to the European Parliament and the Council, including risk analysis at Member State level. A six-month reporting cycle is too infrequent to serve as an early-warning tool for agricultural markets.

6. Obligation for the Commission to act: “shall”, not “may”

- maintaining the principle that when the conditions for triggering protection are met, the Commission is obliged to introduce definitive measures — otherwise the safeguard mechanism becomes discretionary rather than a guarantee of market security. This requires restoring “shall” instead of “may” in Article 11(1).

7. Scope of sensitive products

- maintaining the scope of protection as defined by Parliament, including the amendments to the list of sensitive products in the annex (e.g. clarifying the entries concerning eggs and egg products — EP amendments 15 and 16 — and adding citrus fruits: oranges, lemons and mandarins).

Madam President, the credibility of European trade policy — and public acceptance of any further steps regarding EU–Mercosur — depends on whether the safeguard instruments are real and operational, rather than remaining political declarations “on paper”. I therefore urge you to use the authority and competence of the European Commission to restore in the regulation the solutions adopted by the European Parliament on 16 December 2025, including above all the reciprocity principle as a binding provision.

I look forward to a clear signal that the Commission stands on the side of fair competition, food security, and equal treatment for European farmers and entrepreneurs.

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Yours sincerely,