

Strasbourg, Tuesday, 14 February 2012

Debate:

Pino Arlacchi (S&D). - Mr President, I am not in favour of this agreement and many S&D colleagues agree with me for three main reasons. First, this agreement is a *fait accompli*. It is an additional example of an international action undertaken by the Commission without any consultation with Parliament, and Commissioner Füle informed us that it is not possible to modify it.

Second, the arguments against this agreement put forward by colleagues concerned with the fate of small European and Moroccan producers are very strong. A precipitous liberalisation could bring significant damage, as has occurred in many places already. Moreover, I do not believe that there is any connection between the Arab Spring and democratisation on the one side, and the extent of tomato production in North Africa, on the other.

Third, the most important reason why I am against this agreement is that it does not mention one fundamental fact: the rights of the Sahrawi people who are harassed by Morocco and whose territory is occupied by it, and the fact that these rights are not alluded to directly or indirectly by its clauses. I am very sorry that the Commission did not find the courage to clearly say that these agreements exclude the territory of Western Sahara.

[source: www.europarl.europa.eu]