



MANIFESTO IN DEFENCE OF EUROPEAN TOMATO

1. Europe must ensure its food security

European tomatoes are one of the pillars of food safety in the European Union. They represent a production model based on **strict health controls, full traceability, environmental respect** and **decent working conditions**. This model is not a luxury: it guarantees that European consumers receive safe, sustainable food produced in line with standards that reflect EU values.

2. A sustainable sector for European consumers

European producers in Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands have been investing for decades in **R&D, water efficiency, renewable energies, varietal improvement and biological control**. This commitment has made it possible to:

- drastically reduce the use of plant protection products;
- optimise water use through advanced greenhouses and precision irrigation;
- adapt to an increasingly extreme climate;
- meet new consumer demands: **taste**, sustainability, responsible packaging, zero waste.

This effort cannot be penalized by the large-scale entry of products from countries that **do not meet the same standards**.

3. Unfair competition: a problem recognized by the whole agri-food sector

European organisations have been warning for years about structurally unequal competition:

- **Labour costs:** in Europe, the minimum wage is around €10/hour, while in Morocco it is €0.98/hour, according to a 2023 study by Légumes de France included in a report by the French Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Phytosanitary standards:** Morocco continues to use substances banned in the EU, such as methyl bromide, prohibited since 2005 due to its impact on the ozone layer.
- **Import growth:** since the EU–Morocco Agreement entered into force in 2012, EU imports of fruit and vegetables have increased by 71% (from 831,338 tonnes to 1.4 million tonnes).



- **Displacement of European tomatoes:** Morocco has overtaken traditional European producers, becoming the EU's leading supplier of tomatoes since 2022.

This situation affects producers in Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Poland and the Netherlands, as highlighted by COPA-COGECA and major European fruit and vegetable organisations.

4. The Morocco case: an agreement repeatedly challenged by the Court, yet maintained by the Commission

The EU–Morocco Agreement has been subject to several rulings of the **Court of Justice of the European Union**, which have annulled or questioned its application to products originating in Western Sahara. Nevertheless, the European Commission has sought ways to maintain its application:

- The amendment adopted in October 2025 allows tariff advantages to be extended to products originating in Western Sahara, despite the 2024 ruling annulling the previous agreement.
- The new delegated regulation 2023/2429 allows products from Western Sahara to be labelled using Moroccan regional designations (“Dakhla-Oued Eddahab”, “Laâyoune-Sakia El Hamra”), making it difficult for consumers to identify the real origin of the product and raising concerns regarding compliance with EU labelling rules.
- The EU is considering **financial support** in key sectors such as water, including irrigation, energy and desalination in Western Sahara, creating an unprecedented situation of support to a third country to the direct detriment of European producers.

This situation is incompatible with the principles of fairness, transparency and respect for judicial rulings that the EU itself requires from its Member States.

5. European consumers deserve clarity, not confusion, to know what they are eating

The opaque labelling of products originating in Western Sahara – permitted by recent regulatory changes – risks misleading European consumers, who may believe they are purchasing products produced under standards equivalent to those of the EU when this may not be the case. Representative organisations in the sector have repeatedly warned that this confusion erodes consumer confidence and distorts the market.

6. For a trade policy consistent with the European Green Deal

Europe cannot require its farmers to:



- drastically reduce the use of plant protection products;
- make significant investments in sustainability;
- adapt rapidly to climate change;
- comply with strict labour conditions;

while allowing the entry of products that **do not meet these requirements**.

Consistency requires the EU to apply the principle of “**same rules for all**”. This is not about closing borders, but about ensuring that any tomato entering the EU meets the same standards as European production.

7. What we call for Europe to protect its products

On behalf of European tomato producers, we call for:

- **strict respect for the rulings of the Court of Justice of the European Union** regarding Western Sahara;
- **a thorough review of the EU-Morocco Agreement**, ensuring a level playing field;
- **clear and mandatory country-of-origin labelling**, without ambiguity;
- **automatic safeguard clauses** where imports distort the market;
- **strengthened phytosanitary controls** at EU borders;
- **full reciprocity in environmental, phytosanitary and labour standards** for imported products marketed in the EU;
- **real support for European innovation** in water, energy, varieties and sustainability;
- **recognition of the European tomato sector as strategic** for food security;
- **rejection by the European Parliament of the proposed amendment to the EU-Morocco Association Agreement.**



8. Conclusion: Do not betray European tomatoes – defending them means defending Europe

European tomatoes are not just an agricultural product: they represent a model that protects consumers, the environment and workers. Defending them means defending food sovereignty, fair trade and the political coherence of the European Union.

Europe cannot build its food future on the basis of unfair, opaque agreements that are inconsistent with its own values. The time has come to **place European farmers at the centre** of EU trade and agricultural policy.