

Question for written answer E-002513/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Franz Obermayr (NI)

Subject: Irradiation of foodstuffs

The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes the irradiation of foodstuffs as a 'safe alternative to chemicals'. In Germany, the controversial method based on nuclear technology is currently only allowed for herbs and spices. In 2010, 127 tonnes of foodstuffs (herbs and spices) were treated with so-called ionising radiation. In Belgium, 5 840 tonnes of food have already been irradiated. Among other things, gamma rays or X-rays are used for the irradiation. There are currently different regulations in the individual EU Member States. It has not yet been possible to rule out harmful side effects. Moreover, the so-called 'disinfestation' method is allegedly abused in order to mislead the consumer into believing that a product is fresh and to replace hygiene standards.

These alarming facts give rise to the following questions:

1. Is the Commission aware of the situation referred to above and are there any new findings or studies that can rule out the harmful side effects?
2. Does the Commission believe that action must be taken to prohibit the irradiation of foodstuffs?
3. Are there plans for uniform regulations throughout Europe as far as the irradiation of foodstuffs is concerned?