

**Question for written answer E-010657/2015**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Franz Obermayr (ENF)**

Subject: Food-imitating products - imitation foodstuffs

Food-imitating products made from cheap raw materials are growing in popularity. A good example of this is *analogue cheese*, an imitation similar to cheese which is free from milk or dairy products and consists mainly of protein, vegetable fats, thickeners, flavour enhancers, flavourings and colourings. Imitation ham and imitation shrimps are popular in restaurants and snack bars. Generally speaking food-imitating products are allowed but the consumer must be told if he buys imitation foodstuffs. The raw materials used in these cases no longer have anything to do with the original foodstuff. The only advantage of these products is the price.

The above facts give rise to the following questions:

1. The clear labelling of imitation foodstuffs is a statutory requirement. Yet manufacturers are allowed to change the names of their products to such an extent that, for example, the word 'imitation' no longer expressly appears on the packaging. Are there any plans to tighten up the statutory requirements?
2. Consumer protection groups are concerned about the health implications of the colourings and flavour enhancers. Imitations do not contain any healthy vitamins or minerals. Is there any medical evidence to support the concerns of the consumer protection groups?