

**Question for written answer E-011012/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)**

Subject: Mad sheep disease

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, more commonly known as 'mad cow disease', is one of the most serious health crises which Europe has faced in recent years. Doctor Jean-Louis Thillier is now raising the alarm about ovine spongiform encephalopathy.

Together with Doctor Alain de Peretti, he stresses the dangerous nature of the pathogenic agent, which is suspected of being much more contagious in sheep. The prion, the protein responsible for the disease, affects all the sheep's organs, whereas it attacks only the cow's brain. In addition, Doctor Thillier says that land crossed by sheep might continue to contain prions, which would then be transmitted to other – healthy – flocks.

A lack of checks on land where sheep are found and on the animals themselves may well lead to ovine spongiform encephalopathy causing a serious health crisis.

1. Will the Commission provide the Member States with recommendations on checking land and animals with a view to limiting contagion between sheep and preventing transmission to people?
2. Does the Commission think that ritual slaughter constitutes a further risk of contagion, given the sanitary conditions under which it is performed?