

**Question for written answer E-000950/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
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Subject: Zika virus

The Zika virus is the primary suspect for an increase in the number of babies born with microcephaly in Brazil. We know for now that it only affects pregnant women. If they catch it, their babies may be permanently affected. The main fear is that it may cause foetal malformations or neurological complications in the people infected.

The virus has been reported in 15 countries in Latin America, and some Latin American countries (e.g. El Salvador) have advised women not to get pregnant until the risk disappears.

The spread of the Zika virus epidemic in Central and South America is likely to continue as the *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes responsible are widespread and multiplying. In a globalised world, plagues can travel fast, as we have seen with avian and swine flu.

What is the Commission's assessment of the situation in Europe in relation to the number of cases and possible spread of the virus in the European Union?

What measures will be taken in the event of infection by the virus in the Member States?