

**Question for written answer E-004723/2016**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Adam Szejnfeld (PPE)**

Subject: Curbing food waste in the European Union

Every year, almost 90 million tons of food, i.e. around 180 kg per person, is wasted in the European Union. Studies show that a significant majority of that food waste occurs in our homes. This situation is not only unethical and uneconomic: it is also damaging the environment.

The causes of food waste are bad habits on the part of millions of people, poor storage, overly short use-by dates and advertising that encourages consumers to buy more food than they need. Unfortunately, there are also highly questionable rules that prevent out-of-date food and food waste from being fed to livestock.

Another significant factor in food waste is the fact that producers and shops throw away products that are out of date. In response to this, many EU countries have made efforts to support such products being donated to food banks, although more often than not companies have to pay high taxes – in particular VAT – on those donations.

In May 2013 the Commission called on the Member States to reduce or abolish VAT on food donations. Unfortunately, however, giving food products away is still very costly in many countries, meaning that it is cheaper to throw food away than it is to give it to those in need.

In the light of the foregoing, what steps is the Commission planning to take in order to encourage Member States to curb food waste?