

**Question for written answer E-006618/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Franck Proust (PPE)

Subject: Chocolate: cocoa content and competition

Various products labelled 'chocolate' co-exist on the market but not all of them meet the same standards for levels of constituent ingredients. Directive 2000/36/EC stipulates the permissible degree of latitude in this regard. The directive amended the required minimum levels of cocoa and cocoa butter. In the case of certain chocolate products, the addition of other vegetable fats up to a maximum of 5% is apparently also permitted. Artisan chocolatiers, of whom there are many in my constituency of South-West France, see this as a tricky situation potentially threatening the future of their craft.

1. Can the Commission tell me exactly what the rules are on minimum cocoa and cocoa butter content as well as the maximum permissible volume of vegetable fats and where such fats may be used?
2. Since the introduction of the minimum content levels, has the Commission conducted any assessment of trends in terms of competition between artisan chocolatiers (which are micro-enterprises) and the big chocolate manufacturers?
3. If not, does it intend to do so, with a view to assessing the implications for employment and the retention of our craft skills at regional level?