

**Question for written answer E-004664/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Use of vegetable juice concentrate in organic meat products

Use of vegetable juice concentrate in organic meat products

In 2015, the Federal Administrative Court ruled inadmissible the use of vegetable juice concentrate for the manufacture of meat and sausage products as an alternative to nitrite curing salt, which has hitherto been used, notwithstanding health concerns. Under the court ruling, vegetable juice concentrate was classified as a prohibited additive. This decision comes as a bitter blow to the interests of consumers, not to mention efforts made by the European institutions to achieve a healthier and more natural lifestyle with regard to food production, for example. Furthermore, the rules concerning the use of vegetable juice in meat products are not uniformly implemented in all EU Member States. In Baden-Württemberg, for example, while this particular procedure is not authorised, a total product ban is only admissible where necessary to protect public health. In view of this:

1. Can the Commission specify what criteria are used for classifying vegetable juices/vegetable juice concentrates as foods rather than additives that are subject to authorisation and what conditions apply for allowing the use of starter cultures where fermentation occurs only in the final product in conjunction with vegetable juice/ vegetable juice concentrates?
2. Is it possible to include vegetable juices/vegetable juice concentrates in the exempted categories listed under Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008, thereby authorising their use, or does the 'abstract' approach apply here too?
3. What can be done to ensure that consumers are not misled where nitrite salt or vegetable concentrate are used as (red) colourants or (cured) flavourings, rather than as preservatives?