

**Question for written answer E-000334/2018**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Alex Mayer (S&D)**

Subject: Outbreaks of H5N6 avian influenza

Outbreaks of the H5N6 strain of avian influenza have been circulating in wild avian populations in Europe in recent months, and its rapid spread from east to west suggests that the EU's current approach to preventing avian influenza is falling short of the mark. Recently, several outbreaks have occurred in the UK, despite the UK having been declared free from avian influenza as recently as September. The most recent outbreak was in my constituency at Amwell Nature Reserve, Hertfordshire.

An important part of the current regulatory framework (Council Directive 2005/94/EC) is the general prohibition on vaccination, from which a Member State can request an exemption subject to the approval of the Commission. The result has been that we are always one step behind in attempting to combat the spread of the disease.

Can the Commission explain whether it thinks that the general prohibition on vaccination is still fit for purpose? If not, and particularly if the disease were to become endemic in a Member State, would the Commission re-think this policy?