

**Major interpellation for written answer with debate G-000003/2017
to the Commission**

Rule 130b

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Subject: Differences in declarations, composition and taste of products in central/eastern and western markets of the EU

At the 3524th meeting of the Council on Agriculture and Fisheries held in Brussels on 6 March 2017, regarding the dual quality of foodstuffs, the Commission was asked 'to consider appropriate action including legislation at EU level.'

Studies have confirmed differences in the composition and quality of products with identical brand and identical packaging sold on central/eastern and western markets in the EU, and many products sold in the Central/Eastern EU countries often contain lower-quality ingredients than the branded products sold on Western markets of the EU. Some studies indicate that up to one half of the products contain differences that significantly impact their quality, including a lower proportion of meat, a higher proportion of fats, more artificial sweeteners and preservatives, and lower weight.

This has been noted in a wide range of products – from food and toiletries to detergents and disinfectants – which are of inferior quality and sometimes at a higher price than identical products in the western segment of the EU market.

It is true that companies differentiate products according to markets. However, it is unacceptable that there are differences in the quality of the basic ingredient and that consumers are misled.

Taking into account the EU's single internal market, what measures will the Commission take in order to put an end to such practices of single market fragmentation? Will the Commission revise the EU legislation in order to protect consumers by eliminating double standards in the quality of products sold in central/eastern and western Europe?