

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



**DIRECTORATE GENERAL - INTERNAL POLICIES**

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

## NOTICE to MEMBERS

### Oral Question no. 13/6/2007 by Mrs Avril Doyle and Mr John Bowis

Pursuant to Rule 187 of the Rules of Procedure, please find below an oral question to the Commission.

**Subject: Trans-fats**

Does the Commission agree that there is an urgent need to address the current lack of legislation at European level to protect citizens from the huge health risks posed by trans-fatty acids (partially hydrogenated oils)?

How does the Commission propose to develop such a Community approach to the problem of trans-fats?

*Numerous studies have shown that trans-fats are by far the most dangerous kind of fat, worse even than saturated fat. Trans fats cause significant and serious lowering of HDL ('good') cholesterol and a significant and serious increase in LDL ('bad') cholesterol, causing a variety of coronary and circulatory health problems.*

*While trans-fats occur naturally in small amounts in certain foods such as dairy products, cabbage or peas, they are also created by the partial hydrogenation of vegetable oils.*

*It is this process that is of particular concern. Partial hydrogenation is an industrial process used to make oil more solid, provide longer fry-life for cooking oils and create certain textures in processed foods or to prolong the shelf life of confectionary and bakery products.*

*Industrially processed trans fatty acids present in biscuits, cereal bars, pies, cakes, pastries, fast foods, etc. can actually be reduced or even eliminated relatively easily.*

*Some producers and fast food chains are already taking action to limit the presence of trans-fats in their products.*

*Legislation either banning or severely restricting the use of trans fats exists in Denmark, France and Canada while in the USA the trans fat content of foods must be included on all labels. We need a similar approach at European level to eliminate the use of trans-fats across the board in all Member States. At present there is no specific community legislation on trans-fats.*

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24 April 2007