

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1492/09
by Ioannis Gklavakis (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Authorisation of stevia as a food product

Over the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in demand for products containing the sweetening substance found in the shrub, stevia (pastries, soft drinks, tea), as it is a natural, zero-calorie substitute for sugar which helps combat obesity and diabetes.

Moreover, trials have already been carried out in some European countries to grow the stevia shrub since it is thought that it could be a possible substitute for tobacco growing in some areas.

In the light of the above, can the Commission say whether the European Food Safety Authority has carried out any recent studies into the potential impact of stevia on human health?

What measures is the Commission prepared to take to advance the process of authorising stevia as a food product in the EU? Has a timetable been fixed for that process?