

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3472/09
by Maria Matsouka (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Threat of swine influenza

The swine influenza virus is becoming more widespread with every day. While the number of human fatalities is now more than 150 in Mexico, the virus has spread to the USA and Canada and has even reached Europe, appearing in Germany and Austria, with the number of cases in the UK and Spain also on the rise. The Greek authorities have given assurances that there is no risk to Greece. Nevertheless, public concern is intensifying since the European Commissioner for Health has strongly advised against travel to the USA and Mexico and the WHO has raised its alert level from 3 to 4 and warned that there is no country which is not threatened by swine influenza. There are also suspected cases even in other European countries.

1. Will the Commission say what protective measures can be taken against the virus? What is the European prevention strategy and what measures will be implemented in the event of contamination by the virus in the Member States?
2. Is there any suitable vaccine against the virus at the present time?
3. What is the Commission's assessment of the risk of swine influenza developing into a pandemic?