

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3675/09

by Marco Cappato (ALDE) and Marco Pannella (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: New 'anti-kebab' rules introduced in Lucca and in Lombardy (Italy)

A number of Italian municipalities have issued regulations imposing fines on various kinds of behaviour by citizens, as stated in an earlier written question I tabled with Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and reported by a blog which publicises such regulations, <http://ordinanzapazza.wordpress.com>. The municipalities in question have now been joined by the Region of Lombardy, which has introduced rules 'on the sale of food intended for immediate consumption' which were originally aimed at kebab sellers, but will also apply to shops selling ice cream, pastries, takeaway pizzas, specialty sandwiches and wraps and roast meat. It will be forbidden to consume food outside the establishments where it is sold, which will only be allowed to serve drinks if they are made on the premises. The establishments in question will be obliged to close at 1 a.m. Fines for breaking these rules vary from €154 to €3098, but repeat offenders may have their licences suspended for three months. The town of Lucca, meanwhile, 'in order to protect its culinary traditions and preserve its characteristic architectural, structural, cultural and historical features and traditional décor', has forbidden the setting up of businesses serving 'ethnic' food. Menus must include at least one typical Lucca speciality, prepared solely with products generally regarded as typical of the province of Lucca; the décor must be 'appropriate to the historic town-centre setting'; the establishments must be furnished with 'wooden chairs and elegant fittings of a uniformly high standard', the staff must be 'provided with elegant uniforms which are suited to the surroundings in which the food is served and must be able to speak English'. Proprietors must ensure that customers do not eat in the street or go and sit on the steps of nearby public or religious buildings and monuments or in places of historic and artistic interest or public areas.

Does the Commission agree that regulations of this kind are incompatible with the European principles of a free market and the free movement of services and with policies to end discrimination and encourage multiculturalism, given that they are inspired by racist and nationalist agendas and establish various forms of discrimination, including, in the case of Lucca, discrimination against non-Italian culinary traditions?