

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0862/10
by Konrad Szymański (ECR)
to the Commission

Subject: Harmful effects on human health of energy-saving light bulbs and economic and environmental aspects of their use and production

In November 2009, Polish researchers from the chemistry department of Rzeszow Polytechnic wrote to the Commission setting out a series of forceful arguments concerning the harmful effects on human health of compact fluorescent light bulbs. In this connection, the researchers cast doubt on the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 244/2009¹, which provides for the gradual withdrawal from use of traditional light bulbs in favour of the energy-saving kind. They also drew attention to the shortcomings in the economic and environmental arguments for the compulsory introduction of compact fluorescent bulbs.

In the light of the above, will the Commission answer the following:

1. During the withdrawal from the market of traditional light bulbs, why has proper consideration not been given to the harmful effects on human health of the mercury compounds contained in compact fluorescent light bulbs?
2. Before the regulation was introduced, was research carried out into the effects of energy-saving bulbs in exacerbating glaucoma and depression and on their adverse effects on persons suffering from migraines and epilepsy?
3. What risks are posed to domestic users by a damaged energy-saving bulb?
4. Does the Commission think it important to provide full information on the risks posed by the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs?
5. Was a cost-efficiency study of the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs carried out before the regulation was introduced?
6. Why was it decided on the one hand to end the production of mercury thermometers, yet, on the other, to compel consumers to use a much more common product such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, which contain mercury compounds harmful to human health?
7. Is it true, as the researchers maintain, that the production of a compact fluorescent light bulb requires ten times the amount of energy as that of a traditional light bulb?
8. Is it true, as the researchers maintain, that the one-off simultaneous replacement of all traditional light bulbs by energy-saving ones would lead to only a small percentage saving of energy?
9. Will this energy saving not be offset by the increased energy requirements generated by the production and use of energy-saving light bulbs?

¹ OJ L 76, 24.3.2009, p. 3