

**Question for written answer E-005621/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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Subject: Food contamination by E.coli bacteria

There is an outbreak in the EU of the deadly intestinal bacterium E.coli which has been found in the food chain, mainly in northern Germany, where 10 deaths have been confirmed and several hundred cases have been reported. Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands have also been affected so far.

The Commission identified one of the sources of the outbreak on the evening of 26 May: organic cucumbers from two provinces of Spain (Almeria and Malaga), and, on 26 May, although the import of the Spanish cucumbers dates from much earlier, triggered the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) to inform the 27 Member States of an outbreak.

According to the latest news, tomatoes, lettuces and eggplants are considered also responsible for the contamination. The Spaniards have opposed the fact that their products caused the contamination, which can occur at any time: during production, transport or unloading.

How does the Commission address this issue? Is there a daily monitoring of the situation? Has the source of contamination been identified? If so, what is it and what quantities have been contaminated? Has this contaminated food been withdrawn? Into which Member States have the products been imported? If the source has not been identified yet, which further actions is the Commission planning to follow?

Is there a danger of contamination in other food as well?

Why has the Commission triggered the RASFF with a delay of more than two weeks since the contaminated cucumbers were imported?