

**Question for written answer E-000062/2014  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE)**

Subject: Commission regulation on maximum levels of tarry substances in food

In August 2011, the Commission published a regulation on the content of tarry substances in food. The regulation, which comes into force on 19 September 2014, reduces the permissible levels of tarry substances in smoked meats, in this case benzo(a)pyrene, from 5 to 2 micrograms per kilogram, which for very many Polish cold meat producers, especially in the Podkarpacie province, where 95% of small smoked meat producers are concentrated, means cutting production and an increase in unemployment. Poland produces and exports the largest volume of traditional products and their quality and unique flavour is highly acclaimed and valued in the majority of European Union countries.

In the case of goods produced using traditional methods, i.e. in wood-fired smoking ovens, it is quite impossible to meet the above norms, as the moisture levels of wood vary. Producers also emphasise that it would be extremely expensive to test each batch of goods for their benzo(a)pyrene content, and in addition it can take up to seven days to obtain test results, which automatically reduces the use-by date of the smoked meat products.

I also wish to draw the Commissioner's attention to the fact that the EU regulation is not as restrictive as regards other products such as certain smoked fish, mussels and processed foods based on cereals and cocoa, for which the maximum levels are 5 or 6 micrograms per kilogram. Furthermore, it is difficult for small producers to change traditional production technologies.

In respect of the above:

1. Could the Commission reconsider the above-mentioned regulation in the context of these smallest businesses in the smoked meats sector, which produce cooked meats according to traditional recipes?
2. Following the example of other countries, such as Sweden, can the Commission maintain a derogation from these norms for selected traditional products?
3. Has the Commission conducted, or does it intend to conduct, consultations with smoked meat sector enterprises in order to inform them of how best to adapt their technologies to maintain the traditional methods of producing smoked meats whilst meeting the new norms?