

**Question for written answer E-002941/2018
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Francis Zammit Dimech (PPE)

Subject: Implementation of the fruit and vegetables scheme and its impact on students and farmers

According to reports in the media from farmers and parents, students are being served frozen food as part of the fruit and vegetables scheme. Emphasis has been placed on the fact that that priority should be given to fresh and local products. In the past, the distribution of fruit and vegetables in schools was carried out by a company that sourced fresh local produce. For unknown reasons, the government has awarded the tender to another firm, which clearly is not in a position to keep up the previous standards, even if fresh and local products are available on the market. Media reports have confirmed that local farmers have had to discard truckloads of produce. As a result of the lack of demand, the price of local produce has decreased, affecting farmers.

Can the Commission confirm whether it is aware of the situation and whether any recommendations will be made to tackle this situation?

Can the Commission clarify whether frozen fruits and vegetables should be used when fresh, local products are available, and if the current implementation procedures reflect the provisions laid down in the regulations?

Does the Commission feel that such measures reflect the spirit of the CAP that seeks to strengthen the position of small farmers occupying a disadvantaged place in the food production chain?