

Question for written answer E-000972/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Risks and damage to European agriculture due to the transmission of the coronavirus via animals and/or animal products of Chinese origin

2019-nCoV is a very serious global public health threat. According to the World Health Organisation, more than 64 000 people have been infected, including 2 000 additional cases registered just in the past 24 hours, and so far the number of reported deaths is 1 383.

According to the latest research by the South China Agricultural University, 2019-nCoV coronavirus is thought to be of animal origin and, in particular, to have come from bats in the province of Wuhan in China. The WHO has also stated that people travelling in China should avoid contact with live or dead animals. However, risk is also attached to products of animal origin entering Europe without the necessary checks being carried out at ports and borders to detect the presence of the virus.

In light of the above, can the Commission state:

1. whether this situation could aggravate the epidemic, with the infection also spreading to animals, thus causing incalculable damage to European agriculture;
2. how it intends to verify that animals or products of animal origin imported from China do not cause the 2019-nCoV virus to spread in the agricultural sector in Europe;
3. what urgent measures and funding it could use to defend agriculture and consumers if the virus were regrettably to begin to spread among animals in Europe?