Question for written answer E-004416/2020
to the Commission
Rule 138
Cindy Franssen (PPE)

Subject: Assessment of botanicals under Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006

Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006 provides harmonisation in relation to the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to foods. Article 8 of this regulation can lead to substances being prohibited, restricted or subject to Union scrutiny based on a scientific assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) of their possible harmful effects on human health.

This regulation is being used increasingly to assess the safety of active substances of certain botanicals used in foods. Based on the assessment by EFSA, entire plants are deemed toxic, when only a certain active substance is identified as possibly harmful. The methodology used by EFSA does not take into account the specific characteristics of the plant extracts. This process may lead to the ban of certain botanical products that have a long history of safe use in foodstuffs.

1. Does the Commission agree that Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006 was originally not meant to be used for product classification?

2. How does it assess the methodology used by EFSA to assess the possible toxicity of active substances present in botanicals?

3. Is it aware of the specificity of botanicals used in food supplements compared with their use in medicines, as well as of the need for further EU harmonisation for botanicals used in food supplements?