

**Question for written answer E-001228/2021
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Cindy Franssen (PPE)

Subject: Harmful substances in face masks

When the global coronavirus pandemic began, many Member States faced a major shortage of face masks, leading to massive government procurement in a bid to resolve the issue as swiftly as possible. This resulted in an unforeseen global rush for masks, rapidly leading to doubts regarding their safety.

Reports suggest¹ that the procured masks contain nanoparticles of silver and titanium dioxide. The ECHA has concluded that titanium dioxide is potentially carcinogenic when inhaled by humans (cat. 2). In a recent resolution, the European Parliament opposed the use of titanium dioxide as a food supplement due to the high risk of inhalation. The substance is, however, also used in textile processing.

Has the Commission carried out checks on domestically purchased masks to verify their compliance with European safety standards? What sanctions is it able to impose on companies selling masks that turn out to be non-compliant?

1. Given the public health risks associated with inhaling nanoparticles of silver and titanium dioxide, should this technique still be used in face masks?
2. Considering the dangers of inhaling titanium dioxide, is its use still justifiable in general?

¹ <https://www.demorgen.be/nieuws/stoffen-mondmaskers-die-overheid-gratis-uitdeelde-via-apotheken-mogelijk-giftig~bf3a6b75/>