

**Question for written answer E-001748/2021  
to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Frédérique Ries** (Renew)

Subject: European measures concerning sesame seeds contaminated with ethylene oxide

In September 2020, the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (Agence fédérale belge pour la sécurité de la chaîne alimentaire, AFSCA) confirmed that a batch of sesame seeds from India had exceeded the maximum limit for ethylene oxide. Ethylene oxide is a disinfectant gas that is used, among other things, to prevent the formation of mould, but its use is banned in Europe. In high doses it can be carcinogenic.

The European Union has set the maximum residue limit (MRL) at 0.05 mg per kilo of sesame seeds.

Could the Commission answer the following three questions:

1. Can it confirm that other products (psyllium, spices, etc.) have been contaminated by this same pesticide, which is banned in the Union?
2. Should the precautionary principle not be applied? In other words, should there not be a temporary ban on all imports of sesame seeds from India<sup>1</sup>?
3. Given that there are other non-harmful techniques for cleaning sesame seeds, does the Commission now intend to encourage the Indian authorities to clean the seeds in situ using steam?

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<sup>1</sup> On 22 October 2020, Parliament amended Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1793 as regards sesamum seeds originating in India in order to add ethylene oxide to the list of substances for which 50% of imports have to be checked. L\_2020353EN.01000401.xml (europa.eu)