

**Question for written answer E-003698/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Increase in heavy metal contamination

A study published by Public Health France revealed that the country's entire population had been exposed to heavy metal contamination, including arsenic, copper, mercury or even cadmium, with potentially disastrous consequences for people's health. Sources of exposure include seafood, (organic or non-organic) cereals and organically grown vegetables.

In January 2019, despite warnings from the European Food Safety Authority, the Commission authorised the use of copper in organic farming for a further seven years.

With regard to maritime flows, in order to bypass recent environmental standards, cargo ship owners have installed scrubbers on their vessels to release various toxic substances into the water rather than into the air. This has resulted in an increase in marine pollution and in the toxicity of ocean consumer products.

In the light of the above:

1. What is the Commission's plan of action once the extension regarding the use of copper has come to an end?
2. Is there a plan to support farmers in making this much-needed transition in the future?
3. Does the Commission intend to impose penalties on cargo ship owners who circumvent existing environmental legislation and standards?