Question for written answer E-004804/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: Potential risks of laboratory-created synthetic fish: EU market and consumer health protection by the Commission

Experiments have been under way for some years now to produce fish in laboratories by cultivating animal stem cells. Multinationals hope to be able to market through this new technology a synthetic alternative to natural fish-based products.

To date, these experiments on in vitro fish have concerned bluefin tuna, sea bass fillets, tilapia, perch and anchovy.

The multinationals aim to make synthetic fish available in the future at a price that large retailers can afford.

On the subject of in vitro food, Stefania Ruggeri, a researcher at the Italian Council for agricultural research and analysis of agrarian economy (CREA) has described these as ‘interesting experiments from the point of view of technological innovation but not as a story about food. Perhaps we should try exploring other roads as well to ensure everyone has access to good healthy food and to take care of our planet.’

Europe is the biggest importer of fish worldwide. Recently the multinational Nomad Foods, which also owns the Findus Italia brand, signed an agreement with the US start-up BlueNalu to start producing synthetic fish in Europe.

Given the socioeconomic impact any future large-scale production of synthetic fish would have on traditional fishing and aquaculture:

1. Is the Commission aware of these experiments to produce synthetic fish?
2. What action does it intend to take concerning these products?
3. How will it protect consumers and operators in the traditional fishing and aquaculture sector?