

**Question for written answer E-002479/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Krzysztof Jurgiel (ECR)

Subject: Risk of substituting milk offered under the 'school fruit, vegetables and milk' scheme with plant-based drinks

ProVeg International, which promotes a vegan lifestyle, has launched an initiative to introduce plant-based drinks as a replacement for cow's milk in the EU scheme for schools. The messages coming from the organisers of the initiative are worrying and very harmful, especially as they are accompanied by the slogan schoolmilk.org¹, which is a clear reference to milk in schools.

The campaign is based on the message that plant-based drinks can effectively replace valuable cow's milk in a child's diet, which is one of the core elements of the EU-funded 'school fruit, vegetables and milk' scheme.

Almost all plant-based drinks are complex and processed products (despite being used as natural substrates). At every stage of a complex technological process, the nutrients present in unprocessed natural substrates are irreversibly lost. Producers do not provide information on how they prepare individual substrates to produce the final product (they are not even obliged to do so).

Cow's milk is produced according to a long-established, unchanging and simple technology. Trying to replace cow's milk with drinks such as soya is actually dangerous for children. The oestrogenic phytohormones it contains (three active compounds, including genistein) can cause premature puberty symptoms, especially in girls.

In the light of this:

Is the Commission considering replacing milk, which is the basis of the 'school fruit, vegetables and milk' scheme, with plant-based drinks?

¹ <https://schoolmilk.org/>