

**Question for written answer E-000325/2023  
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Substandard asparaginase on the EU market

A recent report from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism in partnership with STAT laid bare a structural problem in the global pharmaceutical market<sup>1</sup>, in particular with regard to asparaginase, an essential drug for treating cancer in children. Indeed, the two high-quality asparaginase products most commonly used in Europe are often unaffordable for hospitals or not available on the global market, for which reason less expensive alternative brands of asparaginase are used. Most of these drugs do not meet the necessary safety and quality standards and can cause the death of children during treatment. However, these substandard drugs are still available on the global market and, according to the aforementioned report, have also been used in Italy.

1. Does the Commission know how many types and what volume of these dangerous, substandard products have reached the EU market?
2. How does it plan to tackle this issue?
3. In the longer term, what does it plan to do in order to ensure that essential and high-quality medicines remain available and affordable on the EU market at all times?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2023-01-25/the-drug-was-meant-to-save-childrens-lives-instead-theyre-dying>.