

**Question for written answer E-000624/2023
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Threat to public health posed by fur farms

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became evident that fur farming poses a threat to human and animal health. The SARS-CoV-2 virus has been detected on at least 480 mink fur farms across 12 countries.

Additionally, the highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) virus was recently detected on a mink farm in Spain. Scientists found conclusive evidence that this virus had been transmitted between mink and at least one of the identified variants now favours mammal-to-mammal transmission¹.

Virologists have expressed grave concerns that, given the current prevalence of the virus in bird populations, H5N1 may be transmitted to intensively farmed mink elsewhere, creating a mechanism for a future avian influenza pandemic.

1. What actions has the Commission taken to ensure that adequate (biosecurity) measures are being introduced by Member States to prevent the spread of H5N1 and SARS-CoV-2 to animals on fur farms?
2. Given the threat posed by fur farms to human and animal health, as well as the severe negative impact on animal welfare, will the Commission consider banning fur farming as part of its review of EU animal welfare legislation?

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¹ Montserrat, A. et al., 'Highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection in farmed minks, Spain, October 2022', *Eurosurveillance*, Vol. 28, No 3, 2023: <https://doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2023.28.3.2300001>.