

**Question for written answer E-001742/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Sarah Wiener (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Need for action regarding the advertising of breast-milk substitutes

Breast-milk is important for the healthy development of children and is vastly healthier than substitute products. A direct consequence is the altered composition of the gut microbiome, which can still be detected in youth. A shorter breastfeeding period, for example, leads to a microbiome composition similar to that found in the case of obesity¹.

Despite the well proven importance of breast-milk for health, the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes is only partially implemented in the EU Member States. The corresponding 2015 Directive lacks measures such as a ban on gifts to healthcare workers. And yet, the breastfeeding rate is particularly low in countries with high incomes, and more substitute products are sold. Nevertheless, and despite the WHO's clear recommendation that the rules be adapted and the fact that new studies confirm the importance of limiting such advertising², in its reply to a question by Tilly Metz, the Commission did not indicate that it had any such plans³.

1. Does the Commission recognise the important role of breast-milk for the healthy development of children through to adulthood?
2. Given how important this is, why is the Commission not considering a revision of the rules, even though this would benefit many future EU citizens?

Submitted: 31.5.2023

¹ <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10517-019-04617-7.pdf>

² [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)019316/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)019316/fulltext).

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003456-ASW_EN.html