

**Question for written answer E-002786/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Annika Bruna (ID)

Subject: Will an epidemic worse than COVID-19 soon break out because of fur farms?

Mammals reared for fur, which are often kept in small cages, can easily contract pneumonia, which can then spread through sneezing. These viral diseases can mutate and jump to humans, which is when they become classed as zoonotic diseases or zoonoses.

As the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak may have stemmed from mink farms in China, leading countries such as Denmark have shut down such farms to reduce the risk of virus mutation and contamination.

More recently, in August 2023, the Finnish authorities ordered the culling of 120 000 foxes and mink to contain an outbreak of bird flu transmitted by wild birds to fur animals. It is worth recalling that H5N1, with a mortality rate of over 50 %, has the potential to mutate or recombine with another virus and contaminate humans.

In response to this zoonotic risk, most Member States want to ban fur farming, as evidenced by the meeting of agriculture ministers on 26 June 2023.

Will the Commission ban the rearing, import and marketing of animal fur products on the European market, in accordance with its commitments to:

1. Revise Directive 98/58/EC concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes?
2. Phase out the rearing of animals in cages?

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