

**Question for written answer E-000756/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Sara Matthieu (Verts/ALE)

Subject: An answer to the misuse of nitrous oxide as an intoxicant and the detrimental impact of nitrous oxide canisters on waste treatment facilities

Nitrous oxide, or 'laughing gas', is increasingly being used as an intoxicant. In particular, the fact that it is increasingly being used in vehicles is alarming. Misuse has a detrimental impact on the health of those who use it and on road safety, but also on the waste treatment sector: metal canisters containing residual nitrous oxide may explode, damaging facilities and resulting in shutdowns. Some countries are moving to ban the sale of nitrous oxide; but as it is mainly sold on-line, the impact of that is limited. Nor does a ban necessarily result in a solution for collecting canisters safely. That is demonstrated by the situation in the Netherlands, which has introduced a ban and is having to contend with explosions. A European approach is imperative.

1. In what countries can such misuse and the impact thereof on the waste sector be observed, and are there tried-and-tested measures that have resulted in less misuse?
2. What measures does the Commission intend to take to tackle such misuse coherently in the EU in a way that can be effectively enforced, such as by means of a ban?
3. What measures does the Commission intend to take to prevent nitrous oxide canisters from ending up in waste treatment plants, and what role does it see in that connection for a deposit scheme for metal canisters?

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