

**Question for oral answer O-000106/2016  
to the Commission**

Rule 128

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on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Subject: Trans fats (TFAs)

Trans fatty acids are unsaturated fats found in foods obtained from ruminants and in industrially produced, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Consumption of industrially produced, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils has been associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. High TFA intake is a risk factor in particular for developing coronary heart disease – a disease that is conservatively estimated to account for some 660 000 deaths annually in the EU, or around 14 % of overall mortality.

TFAs are used by the food industry owing to specific characteristics that bring products to the desired consistency and guarantee a long shelf life. But, most of all, they are cheap input for the production process. Products that are currently being made with TFAs are mostly fast food, convenience products and snacks (both sweet and savoury), and are therefore classified as heavily processed food. Article 30(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers requires the Commission 'to submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the presence of TFAs in foods and in the overall diet of the Union population. The report shall be to assess the impact of appropriate means that could enable consumers to make healthier food and overall dietary choices or that could promote the provision of healthier food options to consumers, including, among others, the provision of information on trans fats to consumers or restrictions on their use'. The Commission was invited to accompany the report with a legislative proposal 'if appropriate'. In the report published in December 2015, the Commission takes account of the situation and considers possible options (legislative and non-legislative) to limit TFA consumption in the EU, outlining some of the possible consequences of introducing these approaches. The Commission abstained from making a legislative proposal.

Since the adoption of Regulation 1169/2011, compelling evidence has emerged for the health benefits of limiting industrial trans fats in food. Will the Commission therefore propose such limits in order to protect public health?

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Forwarded: 15.7.2016

Deadline for reply: 22.7.2016