

WRITTEN QUESTION P-6783/08
by Béla Glattfelder (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Melanin in imported Chinese vegetables

Recently, melanin has been found in certain food products in China. Given the fact that the toxic material originated from pesticides and fertilisers, it is highly probable that melanin could occur in any other plant products or animal foodstuffs.

The European Commission has already imposed a ban on Chinese milk powder and soya products.

Chinese vegetables – including fresh garlic and peas, frozen mixed vegetables, canned mushrooms and tomato paste – imported into Australia were also reported in October to contain melanin. The Australian food authorities launched an investigation with this issue in October 2008, and representatives of civil society called for more rigorous testing of horticultural products originating in China.

Has the Commission launched an investigation with imported Chinese foodstuffs, including fruits and vegetables?

Has the Commission taken any action to protect the health of European consumers?

If yes, what measures does the Commission envisage to maintain food safety in the EU?