

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0246/09
by Katerina Batzeli (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Sale of food past its sell-by date

It has been reported in the press that the United Kingdom is seeing an increased number of cases in which food past its sell-by date has been offered for sale to consumers at reduced prices. This phenomenon seems to be linked to the economic crisis and its impact on lower income groups. It is feared that this phenomenon will now spread to other markets and that industries and food supply chains will take advantage of it, and that finally basic food directives will be violated.

Are the Commission and the European Food Safety Authority aware of these practices?

Are these practices compatible with Community law on food safety and the operation of the single market?

Will controls be carried out on enterprises engaged in such practices and will they be punished?

Does the Commission believe that existing measures to address the food requirements of the lower income groups, such as the revised food distribution programme for the most deprived, is sufficient, given the economic and food crisis and the increase in the percentage of persons living below the poverty threshold?

What other measures does it intend to take in this connection to ensure that the entire population of Europe enjoys the human right of access to safe food?

What measures does the Commission recommend that Member States should take as part of national programmes to deal with the crisis?

In view of the dialogue on the future of the CAP, how does the Commission intend to take into account the need for the EU to have adequate food supplies and for markets to be better regulated?