Priority question for written answer P-004919/2021
to the Commission
Rule 138
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Subject: EU ban on substances used in tattoo ink lacks scientific evidence and risks undermining the businesses of European tattoo artists

The upcoming ban on more than 4,000 substances used in tattoo ink will take effect at the beginning of 2022. Medical experts are already questioning the ban and emphasising the complete lack of evidence that tattoos lead to cancer.

A Danish expert, Jørgen Serup, Chief Physician at Bispebjerg Hospital’s Department of Dermatology and Chair for the European Society of Tattoo and Pigment Research, has established that no scientific research has proven a link between cancer and tattoo ink.

As an expert, Mr Serup has questioned the grounds on which the European Chemicals Agency based their recommendation for a ban on the 4,000 substances.

Due to the ban, many tattoo artists fear that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to purchase tattoo ink legally. Many colors will not be available to use in tattooing and currently there are no possible replacements.

1. What is the Commission’s position on the lack of evidence linking cancer with tattoo ink?
2. How will it ensure that tattoo artists will still be able to tattoo customers in the EU when 4,000 substances used in tattoo ink are banned?
3. Is it considering a new directive focused specifically on ink used in tattoos?