

Question for written answer E-014907/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Anne Sander (PPE)

Subject: Irradiated ingredients and foods

The irradiation of ingredients and foods is a means of reducing the number of pathogenic or microorganisms or microorganisms causing decay and it is an effective alternative to chemical decontamination or conservation.

The World Health Organisation has recognised the safety of irradiated foods and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) acknowledged in 2011 that this technique was risk-free. However, in the eyes of the public, ionising radiation is regularly associated with the risks of radioactivity.

Directives 1999/2/EC and 1999/3/EC are concerned with the use of this technology, ensuring consumer information and the monitoring of health issues. Persistent concerns in various parts of the food chain (manufacturers-distributors-consumers) appear to be behind its limited use in Europe at this time, the volume of irradiated foodstuffs in Europe having fallen sharply since 1999.

However, the technology is continuing to be developed on other continents, especially Asia. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has recently launched a global programme on the use of X-ray and electron beams for the purposes of food irradiation.

In view of this, does the Commission intend to carry out new information campaigns, assessments or scientific studies to address these concerns and update the legislative framework provisions currently in force with a view to facilitating the development of this technology?