

Question for written answer E-004753/2025

to the Commission

Rule 144

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Subject: EU measures to reduce the use of carcinogenic nitrites in processed meats

In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organization, classified processed meats as Group 1 carcinogens due to strong evidence that the nitrites used in the curing process contribute to the formation of carcinogenic nitrosamines. Ten years later, scientific evidence linking nitrite-cured meats to bowel, pancreatic and breast cancers has only strengthened, yet regulatory action across the EU remains limited. While lower nitrite limits recently came into force, they still leave consumers unnecessarily exposed to compounds with proven carcinogenic potential.

1. Does the Commission intend to propose further measures to progressively restrict and phase out the use of nitrites in processed meats, with clear timelines and transitional support for producers?
2. Will it consider introducing mandatory, harmonised front-of-pack health warnings on nitrite-cured products to ensure consistent information and protection for consumers across Member States?
3. Will the Commission commit to funding comparative research and pilot projects to identify, validate and scale nitrite-free curing technologies, including support for SMEs to transition to safer alternatives?

Given the EU's responsibility under Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to ensure a high level of human health protection in all policies, further coherent EU action on nitrites would safeguard public health and support innovation in a more competitive, health-conscious food sector.

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