Question for written answer E-000823/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
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Subject: Revision of PCB limits for regenerated mineral oils under Regulation (EU) 2019/1021

Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants currently sets a polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) limit of 50 parts per million (ppm) for used oil to be regenerated (and it is 25 ppm in some Member States).

The Commission is preparing an implementing act revising Annex I to the regulation, with early drafts indicating a possible reduction of this limit to 2.5 ppm (with initial proposals having been even lower) for products resulting from the regeneration of used oil, such as base oil, bitumen and gasoil.

Current standard analytical methods used across the EU for monitoring PCB content in used and regenerated oils (EN 12766 1–2) do not allow for reliable detection below 4 ppm. Setting a limit below this threshold would therefore create a gap between the legal requirements and available detection technologies. Should regeneration become technically or economically unviable for a significant share of collected waste oil, it may be diverted to combustion, which remains subject to a higher PCB limit (50 ppm). This would risk undermining the waste hierarchy principle established in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC, which prioritises regeneration over energy recovery, without any clear environmental benefit.

In this context:

1. Has the Commission assessed the technical feasibility and enforceability of limits below 4 ppm and considered a gradual decrease, aligned with the declining presence of unintentional trace contaminant PCBs?

2. Has it assessed the impact on industrial competitiveness and circular value chains?

3. How will the Commission ensure compliance with the waste hierarchy principle?

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