

**Question for written answer E-003986/2026
to the Commission**

Rule 144

**Stefano Bonaccini (S&D), Camilla Laureti (S&D), Dario Nardella (S&D), Georgia
Tramacere (S&D)**

Subject: Public food procurement – nutritional criteria and limiting ultra-processed food in school and hospital canteens

The proposal for a public procurement act is a step forward in the regulation of public procurement, recognising the unique characteristics of food products and, in Article 53, allowing authorities to take into account criteria related to food quality and sustainability, including nutritional value, freshness, seasonality and impacts on health.

This provision is particularly important in school and hospital canteens, where the choices made by public authorities have a direct impact on the nutrition of children, patients and people in frail health.

A growing body of scientific evidence sees a link between increased consumption of ultra-processed foods and a greater risk of obesity and metabolic and cardiovascular diseases. Some authorities, such as Municipality of Rome, Bologna, Florence and Bari, have already provided for excluding these foods from school canteens.

In view of the above:

1. In Article 53, why did the Commission limit itself to making the application of criteria relating to nutritional quality and health impacts optional, instead of introducing mandatory minimum criteria for public food procurement?
2. Will it clarify, including through specific guidelines, the conditions under which public authorities may apply restrictions or exclusions to ultra-processed food in bidding processes for school and hospital canteens, thus providing legal certainty for contracting authorities?

Submitted: 2.10.2026