

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002999/24
to the Commission**

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Ignazio Roberto Marino (Verts/ALE), Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE)**
(17 December 2024)

Subject: Mercury levels in tuna and lack of transparency from the PAFF Committee

A recent report by the non-governmental organisations BLOOM and FoodWatch revealed that out of 148 cans of tuna sampled in five European countries, 10% exceeded the mercury limits set for fresh tuna (1 mg of mercury per kilogram of product) and 57% exceeded the more stringent limits in place for other seafood products (0.3 mg/kg). The same report also highlighted that the consumption of a single 100 g can contaminated at the maximum threshold set by the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF Committee) under Regulation (EU) 2023/195 ⁽¹⁾ for fresh tuna would suffice to exceed the tolerable weekly intake of mercury (as defined by the European Food Safety Authority) for any individual weighing up to 70 kg.

Taking all this into consideration:

1. Is the Commission planning to publish the list of attending members and detailed minutes of the working groups preparing the work of the PAFF Committee, as it does in the case of the Working Group on Industrial and Environmental Contaminants?
2. Does the Commission envisage facilitating MEPs' access to the work and documentation produced by the committee and, more generally, facilitating scrutiny by Parliament?
3. How has the Commission ensured in the past that business operators respect the limits set in Regulation (EU) 2023/915 and how does it plan to do so in the future?

Submitted: 17.12.2024

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(18 March 2025)

Agendas and minutes of the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (SCoPAFF) — Section Novel Food and Toxicological Safety of the Food Chain are published in the comitology register ⁽¹⁾ of the Commission.

The same applies to draft proposals which are presented for vote in the Committee, facilitating scrutiny by the Parliament. No minutes are however prepared and published in the case of meetings of the Working Group on Industrial and Environmental contaminants in food or any other Working Group meetings on food contaminants.

Experts from the competent authorities of the Member States attend meetings of SCoPAFF and Working Groups, and their identity is subject to the requirements for personal data protection.

The enforcement of EU maximum levels on contaminants in foods, in accordance with the requirements provided for in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/931 ⁽²⁾ and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/932 ⁽³⁾, is under the responsibility of the Member States.

¹ ⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EU) 2023/195 of 30 January 2023 fixing for 2023 the fishing opportunities for certain stocks and groups of fish stocks applicable in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, OJ L 28, 31.1.2023, p. 220, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/195/oj>.

⁽²⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/comitology-register/screen/committees/C20408/consult?lang=en>

⁽³⁾ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/931 of 23 March 2022 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2017/625 of the European Parliament and of the Council by laying down rules for the performance of official controls as regards contaminants in food OJ L 162, 17.6.2022, p. 7-12 ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2022/931/oj

⁽³⁾ Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/932 of 9 June 2022 on uniform practical arrangements for the performance of official controls as regards contaminants in food, on specific additional content of multi-annual national control plans and specific additional arrangements for their OJ L 162, 17.6.2022, p. 13-22 ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2022/932/oj