

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001039/25
to the Commission
Jessika Van Leeuwen (PPE)
(10 March 2025)**

Subject: Lack of parliamentary oversight over the EU agri-food chain Observatory

We understand that the Commission accepts recommendations directly from the European agri-food chain Observatory (AFCO) without prior consultation with Parliament. This raises questions about the democratic legitimacy of the Observatory's influence on EU agricultural and food policy. Moreover, the selection process for the Observatory's 80 members appears to have been conducted without any input from Parliament, despite the Observatory's significant impact on policy discussions.

In light of the above:

1. Why does the Commission accept recommendations from the European agri-food chain Observatory without prior consultation with Parliament, thereby bypassing democratic scrutiny?
2. Why was Parliament not involved in the selection process for the 80 European agri-food chain Observatory members, despite its role as a directly elected body representing EU citizens?
3. How does the Commission intend to ensure that Parliament has a greater say in future decisions regarding the European agri-food chain Observatory's structure, recommendations and policy influence?

Supporters ⁽¹⁾

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**Answer given by Mr Hansen on behalf of the European Commission
(7 May 2025)**

The EU agri-food chain observatory (AFCO) was launched in 2024 as one of the actions that aim to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain and reinforce trust between actors.

As set out in its Terms of Reference ⁽¹⁾, the purpose of AFCO is to advise the Commission and to exchange information and discuss, based on available evidence and facts, with a view to establishing a common diagnosis of the situation across markets, and bring increased transparency on prices, cost structure, margin distribution and added value in the supply chain, while respecting confidentiality and competition rules.

Expert groups, such as AFCO, provide advice and expertise and do not engage in policy discussions. In line with its Terms of Reference, any recommendation of the group would only represent an input to policy making, providing facts and data to inform policy responses by the Commission and other policy-makers. Such analysis can support legislative proposals and discussions by the co-legislators.

Members of AFCO are Member States' authorities and organisations representing stakeholders operating in two or more EU Member States, and active in at least one stage of the food supply chain.

Stakeholder organisations were selected by the Commission through a public call for applications in line with rules for the creation and operation of Commission expert groups ⁽²⁾.

The objective was to gather experts from all along the food supply chain. The European Parliament's Secretariat of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development has an observer status to the group and regularly participates in its meetings.

¹ ¹This question is supported by Members other than the author: Maria Walsh (PPE), Esther Herranz García (PPE)
⁽¹⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&groupID=3949>
⁽²⁾ C(2016) 3301 final.