

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003330/26
to the Commission
César Luena (S&D)
(25 August 2026)**

Subject: Management of catering waste from international flights and the circular economy

Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 classifies catering waste from means of transport operating internationally as Category C material, which means it is subject to strict disposal rules for biosecurity reasons.

However, this category can also include unconsumed, sealed food and beverages from flights from third countries. According to industry data, these types of products account for more than 18% of airline cabin waste worldwide. Treating them along with higher-risk waste can limit the prevention, reuse and recycling options, and have environmental repercussions that could have been avoided.

In view of the above:

1. Does the Commission have any data on the composition and the health and environmental risks of the different types of catering waste from international flights?
2. Would it consider carrying out a scientific risk assessment to determine whether certain unconsumed, low-risk products could be managed separately, while fully preserving biosecurity guarantees?
3. How will it ensure that the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 is compatible with the EU's objectives in terms of waste prevention, the circular economy and efficient use of resources?

Submitted: 25.8.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(16 October 2026)**

1. The Commission is aware of the health risks of catering waste from means of transports operating internationally (including international flights) but has no data on the exact composition of such catering waste. The regulated collection and disposal of catering waste from international means of transport is an international standard applied by many Member Countries of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). All the EU's main trade partners, such as the US, Canada, the UK as well as Asian, South American and African countries apply similar rules.
2. The Commission does not carry out scientific risk assessments but can mandate the European Food Safety Authority to do so. The Commission does not plan to launch such mandate on catering waste from international means of transport.
3. Implementation of Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 ⁽¹⁾ is the responsibility of the operators and the competent authorities of the Member States under the supervision of the latter. The Commission engaged in extensive exchanges and discussions with airline companies and the International Air Transport Association ⁽²⁾ in 2023-2024 on how to best implement the EU rules, considering also horizontal objectives and involved risks. Those discussions were also conducted together with other WOAH Member Countries at global level. An emerging best practice was that companies could ensure strict separation of various material and thereby prevent various cross-contaminations and reduce quantities of Category C catering waste. Subsequently the Commission also discussed the issue with Member States ⁽³⁾. In addition, the Commission also refers to its answer to Written Question E-003319/2022 ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation) OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, pp. 1-3; ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1069/oj>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.iata.org/>.

⁽³⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f5c97275-2e5f-469d-a5fc-60ba61b79c3d_en?filename=reg-com_ahw_20240711_pres-13.pdf.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2022-003319_EN.html.