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Press release | 30.03.2011

Fukushima/radiation in food

EU tolerance limits for radiation in food imports less strict than Japan; Greens demand revision

The Greens in the European Parliament have raised serious concerns about the applicable EU tolerance limits for radiation in imported foodstuffs from Japan, which are less strict than those applicable in Japan itself. The Greens called for an immediate strengthening of the maximum permitted levels for imports. Commenting on the situation, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said: ***"It is a serious cause for concern that the tolerance limits for radiation in imported foodstuffs from Japan are set so high. The EU limits on food imports from Japan are far less strict than the limits Japan itself applies for internal consumption (1). In the aftermath of the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, the EU had stricter radiation limits in place. It is impossible to understand why the EU applies less strict limits on the tolerated levels of radiation in imported foodstuffs from Japan. These levels, which are irresponsible and put vulnerable groups, like children, at unnecessary risk, reflect the lackadaisical approach of the Commission to nuclear safety. "We call on the EU Commission and EU member states to immediately strengthen these limits. Green calls for stricter limits as part of a legislative review process earlier this year fell on deaf ears (2). There can clearly be no further complacency following Fukushima. We also call on the Commission and Council to heed the demand of the EU Parliament to be included in this decision-making process (3)."*** (1) Comparison: maximum permitted levels of contamination of foodstuff EU-Japan - values in bq/kg or bq/l

	General Food		Milk and dairy		Infant food		Water / Liquid foodstuff	
	EU	**Japan**	**EU**	**Japan**	**EU**	**Japan**	**EU**	**Japan** (b)
Iodine I-131	200	200 (a)	**500**	**300**	**150**	**100**	**500**	**300**

Cesium Cs 134 - 137	**1250**	**500**	**1000**	**200**	**400**	n.a	**1000**	**200**
Plutonium and transuranic elements Am, Pt	**80**	**10**	**20**	**1**	1	1	**20**	**1**
Strontium Sr-90	750	n.a	125	n.a	75	n.a	125	n.a

For vegetables except root vegetables and tubers - does not include grains, meat and fish as the EU value (b) For drinking water - not specified for other liquid foodstuff Source EU Values: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 297/2011 of 25 March 2011 imposing special conditions governing the import of feed and food originating in or consigned from Japan following the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power station. This regulation to values under Council Regulation (Euratom) No 3954/87 of 22 December 1987 laying down maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs and of feedingstuffs following a nuclear accident or any other case of radiological emergency. Source Japanese Values: Notice No. 0317 Article 3 of the Department of Food Safety - 17 March 2011 (2) In the EP vote on the Belet report on radiation in foodstuffs in February, the Greens had pushed for stricter tolerance limits on radiation in EU foodstuffs, with current limits not in line with scientific recommendations. (3) The Belet report on radiation in foodstuffs, adopted by the EP, included the call for the EP to be given co-decision legislative powers over this crucial regulation for EU public health.

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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