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[Press release](#) | 15.02.2011

Radioactive contaminated foodstuffs

EP wants decision-making in EU rules on radioactive foods but outdated tolerance levels still need revising

The European Parliament today adopted a report on the revision of EU rules on the radioactive contamination of foodstuffs (1). MEPs voted for the legal base to be changed to make the EP a co-legislator on the proposal (2). The Greens welcomed the call to change the legal base, however regretted the failure to recommend stricter tolerance levels for radioactive contamination in food. After the vote, French Green MEP **Michele Rivasi** said:

“EU rules on the radioactive contamination of food currently leave the European public exposed to unacceptably high doses of radiation. The rules are outdated and out of synch with international best practice, with the maximum levels of permitted radiation set far too high. We therefore regret the failure of MEPs to clearly call for stricter tolerance levels.

“As the radioactive contamination of food is clearly a concern for European public health, we welcome the call for the European Parliament to be given co-decision rights on this legislative review. We regret, however, the clear indication by the Commission that it will not act on the Parliament's position, which will force the EP to challenge the legal base in the European Court of Justice.

“The current maximum levels of radioactive contamination, which are maintained in the proposed review, are far too high – some even higher than those in place when the Chernobyl disaster occurred. As the proposal stands, it clearly falls short of what is required to protect the European public, particularly children, from radioactive contamination through foodstuffs. The proposed levels would imply that the public be exposed to radiation at levels higher than the maximum limits set out in existing EU legislation on safety standards for ionizing radiation (3). We therefore urge the Commission to come forward in 2012 with a revised and single set of values based on the protection of the most vulnerable population, i.e. the children.

“It is simply not acceptable that this legislative revision would fail to ensure Europe's citizens have total protection from radioactive contaminated food. We therefore hope that MEPs will support stricter tolerance levels if and when the EP gets a say as a co-legislator.”

(1) Belet report on the 'maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination of foodstuffs and of feeding stuffs following a nuclear accident or any other case of radiological emergency'.

(2) The proposal currently falls under the Euratom legal base, under which the European Parliament only

has a consultation role. MEPs have called for the base to be changed to public health under the EU Treaty (article 168).

(3) The levels being proposed for foodstuffs would effectively mean that members of the public consuming contaminated foodstuffs would be exposed to contamination at higher levels than those set out in directive 96/29/Euratom of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionizing radiation

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Responsible MEPs



Michèle Rivasi

Member

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