en | de

Press release | 06.04.2011

Radioactive contamination of foodstuffs

Commission to correct lax EU levels for Japanese imports, Greens urge revision of overall regulation

The European Commission yesterday announced it would be reducing the maximum permitted tolerance levels for radiation in foodstuffs imported to the EU from Japan, after the Green group raised concerns that the EU levels were less strict than those in Japan (1). The Greens urged the Commission to revise the regulation to ensure stricter levels are applied to all foodstuffs in the case of a nuclear accident. Commenting on the decision, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The European Commission has thankfully responded to the concerns we have raised and agreed end the discrepancy between the tolerated levels of radioactive contamination in Japan and the EU. There can be no room for complacency however and the Commission must ensure that the applicable levels in Europe ensure EU citizens have the highest possible protection from radioactive contamination. Clearly, this means revising the general regulations on tolerance levels in foodstuffs, and not just those applying to Japanese imports."

Green MEP **Michele Rivasi,** who was shadow rapporteur in the EP on radioactive contamination of foodstuffs, added:

"The current maximum levels of radioactive contamination for foodstuffs in the EU are far too high – some even higher than those in place when the Chernobyl disaster occurred. Regrettably, just a few weeks ago, a majority of MEPs rejected Green amendments aimed at ensuring that the tolerance levels for radioactive contamination of foodstuffs are consistent with the best international standards (2).

"The applicable 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 with a revised and single set of values based on the protection of the most vulnerable population, i.e. the children. Clearly, given the implications for public health, the EP should have co-decision rights over this legislation and the Commission should come forward with a proposal under the appropriate treaty base to this end."

(1) See initial communication from the Greens/EFA group with detailed values:

(2) See press release following the EP vote in February

(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.

Recommended

Opinion

© Christian Kaufmann



Healthy food starts with healthy farming. Europe must …

04.11.2026

Press release

@gettysignature



U-turn by Conservatives and Social Democrats Puts Jobs…

04.11.2026

Press release



Conservatives and Social Democrats Put Jobs at Risk

22.10.2026

Study



[PFAS levels in Europeans]

01.10.2026

Responsible MEPs



Rebecca Harms

Member



Michèle Rivasi

Member

Please share

- E-Mail