Press release | 13.01.2010

# Radioactive foodstuffs

## EU rules on radioactive contamination of foods need to be strengthened, EP wants greater say

The EP industry and energy committee today adopted a report on EU rules on the radioactive contamination of foodstuffs (1). MEPs called for the legal base to be changed to ensure the European Parliament is a co-legislator on the proposal (2). Green MEPs believe the maximum permitted levels of radioactive contamination are set far too high and would leave the European public exposed to unacceptably high doses of radioactive contamination. After the vote, French Green MEP **Michele Rivasi** said:

*"The radioactive contamination of food is clearly a concern for European public health and, as such, it is essential that this legislation is decided on that basis, with the European Parliament as a co-legislator. MEPs have today sent a strong signal on the need to change the legal base. Hopefully the Commission will respond to this signal by changing the legal base, and not force the EP to challenge the base in the European Court of Justice.*

*"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 maximum levels of radioactive contamination being proposed are far too high according to expert analysis - some of them are even higher than those in place when the Chernobyl disaster occurred. 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). This would expose the European public, notably vulnerable groups and children, to unnecessary risk from contamination and cancer. It is simply not acceptable that this legislative revision would fail to ensure Europe's citizens have total protection from radioactive contaminated food."*

(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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