

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Brussels, 13th July 2021

Dear Madams, President, Commissioner,

You know very well our fierce determination, as Members of the European Parliament, to support the European Commission when it comes to enhancing food safety in the European Union.

At a food and feed crisis coordinator meeting, Tuesday July 13th, your Commission together with Member States, is expected to take a crucial decision on the issue of ethylene oxides in food products.

We urge you to take the decision that EU consumers need : protect their right to food safety, as this right could be put at risk tomorrow.

Since September 2000 and the first warning by Belgium, several Member States have not recalled more than 6200 products contaminated, in spite of the EU ban on ethylene oxide.

Some of these products would have been contaminated by sesame seeds imported from India, other ones contaminated in Turkey by an additive based on carob flour provided by the multinational Cargill. According to the « Food law » regulation EC 178/2002, food which is imported within the European market should respect the applicable EU food legislation. Therefore, these 6200 non-compliant products should lawfully be recalled.

Any other political decision taken tomorrow would send a disastrous signal to the food industry. It would mean that from now on, the EU would accept that products contaminated by banned substances are sold within its common market. It would mean that the precaution principle does not apply to food anymore, on the European soil.

As the Covid 19 crisis has exposed the downsides of the European food system, it is no time to weaken it again. In line with our support to your pledge for EU food sovereignty, we, EU law-makers, urge you today to call on Member States to respect the existing law and thereby protect the health of EU citizens.

We look forward to hearing from you and your services,

Benoît Biteau
Claude Gruffat
Martin Häusling
Sara Matthieu
Piernicola Pedicini
Michèle Rivasi
Sarah Wiener