

**Question for written answer E-001297/2024
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Joanna Kopcińska (ECR)

Subject: Avian influenza

HPAIV A(H5N1) is highly infectious in many avian species, including most domestic poultry species. Unlike most other avian influenza viruses, it has also infected mammals, with cows and goats recently joining the list of susceptible species. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced that high concentrations of the virus strain have also been detected in raw milk from infected cows. As a result, variant A(H5N1) has become a 'global zoonotic pandemic' and the WHO has recognised the threat of avian influenza as being of 'enormous concern'.

1. While avian influenza viruses do not normally infect humans (although human infections do occasionally occur), what monitoring measures has the Commission put in place regarding the way in which the virus is evolving and developing its infection capacity, and what crisis measures is it planning should the virus become capable of broader transmission?
2. Tests carried out by US government agencies (FDA) on commercial pasteurised cow's milk showed genetic evidence of the H5N1 avian influenza virus. However, the polymerase chain reaction tests carried out cannot distinguish a live virus from virus fragments, which could have been killed in the pasteurisation process, so there is no clear position as regards the threat. Has the Commission drawn up an emergency procedure for the eventuality that a virus in this form presents a threat to public health?

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