

European Parliament  
Member of the Environment,  
Public Health and Food Safety  
Committee

**Contact :**

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Our ref. : JDU/nle/lob/171130

Brussels, 23th of November 2017

**Re: ENVI vote on the phosphate in meat objection**

Dear Member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee,

On Tuesday 28 November, you will be voting on a draft motion for a resolution opposing the approval of phosphates for use as food additives in frozen vertical meat spits (e.g. doner kebab, gyros). **BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, as well as Test Achats, call on you to support the objection** for the following reasons:

- **There are concerns over the health effects<sup>1</sup>** of dietary phosphorus intake, particularly in the form of phosphate food additives (phosphoric acid and phosphates (E 338–341; E 343) and polyphosphates (E 450–452)). While evidence is disputed, it is expected EFSA's on-going re-evaluation of the safety of phosphate additives will shed some light on this issue. Until it becomes available by the end of 2018, any new usage of phosphate additives in Europeans' food should be considered with caution.
- Frozen vertical meat spits belong to "*meat preparations*", where the use of phosphate additives is generally not permitted. BEUC and our members disapprove of the use of phosphate additives in any meat preparation as we are concerned these additives could be used for the fraudulent and deceptive practice of **adding water to meat to increase its weight**. Selling water for the price of meat was among the practices we denounced in our report "[Close-up on the meat we eat](#)".
- We see **no convincing technological need** for using phosphate additives in frozen vertical meat spits. Suppliers of tumbling mixes for vertical meat spits offer [phosphate-free solutions](#).
- Moreover, as frozen vertical meat spits are destined to the out-of-home sector, consumers buying kebabs or gyros **would not even be informed** of the presence of phosphate additives in their meat via labelling.

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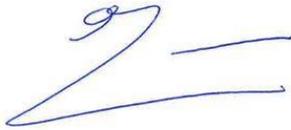
<sup>1</sup> Ritz et al. (2012). [Phosphate additives in food: a health risk](#).

- While the unlawful use of phosphate additives in vertical meat spits by some industry operators might have been overlooked by national authorities in some countries, **this is no valid reason for legalising their use.**
- More fundamentally, **enforcement of EU rules on the use of food additives in the meat sector must be stepped up.** A recent European Commission's report<sup>2</sup> found Member States do not give sufficient priority to the control of the use of additives in meat preparations and products.

Against this background, **we kindly ask you to vote in the interest of consumers and support the phosphate in meat objection.**

We remain at your disposal for any question you may have on the above.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a horizontal line and a short vertical stroke.

Joost VANDENBROUCKE  
Manager Health & Food department

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<sup>2</sup> [Overview report on the official control systems in place for food additives and smoke flavourings.](#)