



Commission for Independent Research and Information about Radioactivity
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CRIIRAD Press Release
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(short version)

Read the [4 pages synthesis](#)

FOOD CONTAMINATION LEVELS IN THE EVENT OF A NUCLEAR ACCIDENT

The CRIIRAD expresses shock and concern at the appalling work undertaken by Euratom experts, and calls for major action against the European Commission's project!

The European regulations

The European Commission has drawn up a proposition of regulation which set the **Maximum Permitted Levels of Radioactive Contamination in Foodstuffs in the event of a nuclear accident**. This project is currently under examination by the European Parliament (which has an advisory role) and by the European Union Council (which has a decision-making role). The limits have been set for four groups of radionuclides and five categories of food-types, including drinking water. No amendment has been made to the levels set in 1987-1989. If the contamination levels do not exceed these limits, food can be sold freely throughout the EU and exported outside the EU.

Unacceptably high levels of risk

If the European Commission is to be believed, the limits ensure the respect of the effective limit of dose, i.e. **1 mSv/year** (a limit which already equates to a high level of risk). This statement is **completely untrue**. The inspections conducted by the CRIIRAD reveal **doses which are 10 times higher** (and up to 100 times in the most severe cases), and they also show that **children will pay the highest price**.

A succession of serious and biased errors

The CRIIRAD analysed the [scientific report](#) which is the basis for the choices of Maximum Level of Radioactive Contamination in Foodstuffs. Published in 1998, this document was written by the official experts of the European Commission (experts known as Euratom because they belong to a group created to apply article 31 of the Euratom treaty).

The critical analysis enabled the CRIIRAD to identify **a series of errors, inconsistencies and irregularities. They are serious and they ALL point in the same direction: they minimise the risks and permit the setting of excessively high contamination limits**. The most striking of these errors and irregularities are explained in greater detail in the 4 pages [synthesis](#). One of them is explained below. It demonstrates a major and prohibitive incoherency between the conception of limits and the field of application of the regulation.

In effect, in the words of the experts themselves, the European Maximum Level of Radioactive Contamination in Foodstuffs has been drawn up by taking into consideration the impact of a **distant accident**, located more than 1 000 km from the frontiers of the European Union. Working from this standpoint, the experts considered that contamination would only affect a small portion European consumers' foodstuffs (10% of solid food, 1% of drinking water). **But the regulations apply to all major nuclear accidents and above all, to those on European soil!** However a nuclear accident in Europe would render the hypotheses used for calculation invalid: the percentage of contaminated foodstuffs would be considerably higher, which calls for significantly lower limits! What needs to be done: either this Maximum Level of Radioactive Contamination has to be drastically reduced, or a second set of regulations must be drawn up to be applied in the event of accidents which may have a major effect in any European Union member country. The situation is urgent: over 42% of the 438 nuclear reactors currently operating in the world are located in Europe. It is highly likely that the next accident will concern us here in Europe.

Given the number and the seriousness of the anomalies, **it is essential that those responsible be clearly identified**, whether they be experts, or Commission members, or elected representatives of the EU member states. A letter has been sent to the European Commissioner who is in charge of public health and food safety, requesting the contact details of the Euratom experts involved in the drawing up of the 1998 document, and also of those who put forward a favourable opinion in 2012. Other courses of action are ongoing. These will be aimed at the European Parliament first of all, as the vote of the ENVI commission will take place on 26 May.

Call for action

The CRIIRAD calls all European citizens to act in order to defend their own health and their children's health. The CRIIRAD encourages everyone to inform themselves, and to sign, and forward, the petition which demands a total, transparent and democratic rework of the regulations applicable in the event of a nuclear accident.

Sign online at : <http://criirad-protégeonsnotrealimentation.wesign.it/fr>