

**Question for written answer E-015582/2015
to the Commission
Rule 130
Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL)**

Subject: Genetic editing techniques

Genetic or DNA editing techniques make it possible to directly modify the genetic material of cells. The DNA chain is cut at specific points in order to change, remove or insert new nucleic acid sequences.

These techniques, when applied to plant or animal organisms, may have unforeseen effects whose consequences may be beyond any control. This means that all such techniques must be accompanied by impact assessments in order to protect public health. Furthermore, the possible presence of substances resulting from these techniques in the food chain must also be governed by rigorous transparency and information rules.

It might be pointed out that in October 2015 the Unesco International Bioethics Committee called for a moratorium on DNA editing techniques in human reproductive cells in order to prevent ethically unacceptable changes to individuals' hereditary characteristics.

What safety guarantees can the Commission offer consumers with regard to the presence of these substances in the food chain?

Will it include genetic editing techniques in the regulation on genetically modified organisms?