

**Question for written answer E-000372/2016
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Bart Staes (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Voluntary 'GMO-free' food information

Last September, the Commission published a study entitled the 'State of play in the EU on GM-free food labelling schemes and assessment of the need for possible harmonisation'¹ and concluded that 'the assessment of the current evidence, including the fact that GM-free labels markets are still predominantly national with limited intra-EU exchanges, does not indicate a clear need for harmonisation'.

With the adoption of the new Novel Food Regulation (2015/2283) and the disappearance of the statement in favour of voluntary GMO-free labelling (recital 10 of the old Novel Food Regulation (258/97)), there now seems to be legal uncertainty as to whether Member States are able to establish criteria for voluntary GMO-free labelling.

- Under what conditions can food products be labelled as GMO-free?
- In the absence of EU rules, are Member States entitled to establish criteria for GMO-free labelling? If so, what limits would there be on this freedom?
- Will the Commission, in its report on the exercise of the legislative delegation (Article 51(2) in the Food Information Regulation (1169/2011)) due on 12 March 2016, consider introducing a legal basis into Regulation 1169/2011 which makes it possible to establish criteria for GMO-free labelling, thus allowing future potential demand for GMO-free labelling to be met while respecting the principle of subsidiarity?

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/enews/enews.cfm?al_id=1621