

**Question for written answer E-002716/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)

Subject: New Breeding Techniques: where do we draw the line regarding the patenting of living things?

The Commission is due to give its opinion soon on 'New Breeding Techniques', which modify the genomes of plants or animals in order to obtain certain desired characteristics, such as tolerance to herbicides, resistance to insects or dwarfism in animals, for instance.

These new techniques allow the food processing industry to patent genes of interest to them but also to claim intellectual property rights on all plants and animals with identical characteristics or genes to those asserted by the patent, including when these characteristics are innate or are the result of traditional procedures with no recourse to a patented invention.

1. Does the Commission intend to classify 'New Breeding Techniques' as GMOs?
2. Does the Commission want to force manufacturers to label their inventions and define the criteria which allow them to be differentiated from natural products or those resulting from traditional breeding techniques? This is what environmental organisations are demanding.
3. Is the Commission aware of the challenges associated with the patentability of living things hidden behind the claims of the agro-industrial lobby?