

**Question for written answer E-005803/2017
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Mireille D'Ornano (ENF)

Subject: Plant-health control measures against *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera*

Diabrotica virgifera virgifera is said to be the insect pest responsible for the biggest financial (estimated at USD 2 billion per annum) and material losses in the United States.

The prevalence of this pest species is lower in the European Union. Recommendation 2014/63/EU notes, however, that the insect pest has spread to more than half of the Union maize growing areas. This observation led to the ending of the quarantine measures taken under the terms of Decision 2003/766/EC.

The development of RNAi pesticides might allow the elaboration of specific plant protection solutions less harmful to maize crops than traditional solutions (see, in particular, article No. 30542 published on 28 July 2016 in the journal *Nature*). Not enough is known about any potentially harmful effects on human health.

1. The decision to withdraw recognition as a regulated harmful organism with quarantine status notwithstanding, does the Commission intend to establish a monitoring programme for this insect?
2. Does the Commission support research programmes into plant protection solutions, in particular with regard to the use of RNAi, against *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera*?
3. Does the European Food Safety Agency intend to publish an opinion on RNAi pesticides and the potential risk posed by them to human health?