

**Question for written answer E-008116/2011
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Cultivation of genetically-engineered seed and use of Roundup weed killer in EU Member States

Monsanto, the multinational agricultural biotechnology corporation, has produced a strain of genetically-engineered seed resistant to the powerful Roundup weed killer also produced by the corporation. Both the weed killer and genetically-engineered crops have taken hold on a massive scale in the USA and Latin America. However, over 20 different types of 'Roundup-ready' weeds have developed with their own defence mechanisms, making them invulnerable. According to scientific studies, the resistant gene is being transferred through pollination even to plants which have not been sprayed.

Furthermore the new mutant weed strains are stronger, larger and more destructive than their predecessors. Glyphosate, the active ingredient of Roundup, makes plants more prone to disease and, according to a number of studies, causes foetal malformation. The maximum residue level (MRL) for glyphosate in soya seed in the EU is 20 mg/kg (a 200-fold increase from 0.1 mg/kg in 1997) and genetically-engineered soya possibly containing glyphosate residues of up to 17 mg/kg is being marketed in Europe.

In view of this:

1. Can the Commission say whether the genetically-engineered Roundup resistant seed is being used in any of the EU Member States, and if so which?
2. Is the weed killer in question being used in any EU Member States and if so, which?
3. Will the Commission, under Regulation 1141/2010 laying down the procedure for the renewal of the registration of active substances, including glyphosate, take measures to ban this substance or impose additional restrictions to reduce the current uses thereof? Is it considering the possibility of reviewing the maximum residue levels (MRLs)?