

**Question for written answer E-005028/2013
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Agnès Le Brun (PPE)

Subject: Seed shallots and traditional shallots

As a result of the breeding behind the development of 'shallots grown from seed', there have been countless debates at EU level on the protection of the designation 'shallot' over recent years.

Since 2005, the inclusion of new shallot varieties in national catalogues and subsequently the European catalogue has been subject to compliance with a technical protocol established by the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO), which is responsible for the protection of plant variety rights in the EU. This strict examination framework enables shallots to be accurately differentiated from onions by growing them over a period of two years and verifying in particular that the strong tendency to split into bulblets peculiar to shallots is respected.

Today it appears that certain varieties of seed have not complied with the technical protocol in question.

Tests conducted in 2011 by GEVES (French Group for the Study and Inspection of Varieties and Seeds) demonstrate that the tendency to split into bulblets of some of these varieties is lower than the threshold established in order for them to be considered as 'shallots'.

Several of these allium varieties are therefore included in the official 'shallot' catalogue and marketed as such, whereas they are not shallots. The varieties concerned are: Conservor, Picador, Armador, Camelot, Ambition and Obelisk.

1. What control does CPVO have over the inclusion of plant varieties? Should this control exist, is it functioning correctly?
2. Has the Commission been notified of the failure to implement the CPVO protocol correctly? Is it already investigating this?
3. In the event that these facts are verified, what rapid measures will the Commission put in place to end this illegal competition, which is jeopardising the 'traditional shallot' sector?