

**Question for written answer E-000407/2019  
to the Commission**  
Rule 130  
**Piernicola Pedicini (EFDD)**

Subject: Genetic mutations brought about by CRISPR editing

Gene editing allows targeted corrections to be made to the DNA of plants: at present the technique most in vogue for this purpose is CRISPR, in which Monsanto is investing with the stated objective of creating super-sweet varieties of strawberries and apples. In the United States, this technology has been judged to be 'safe' although various studies have concluded that genetic mutation experiments using CRISPR resulted in 'completely unexpected mutations'.

In the EU, the European Court of Justice has delivered a judgment in which it held that all mutagenetic techniques should be regarded as producing GMOs and that exceptions should be permitted only for techniques with a long history of safety. However, CRISPR technology is available to anyone, as it can be bought on the Internet, and in many European countries experiments are already being conducted with farm crops to create species that are resistant to pathogens.

Can the Commission say whether, in accordance with the precautionary principle, and bearing in mind the lack of consistent literature on the subject, it considers that more detailed studies and an assessment of the potential impact of CRISPR are needed before allowing experiments in genetic mutation to create super-fruit and/or modifications to bacteria and micro-organisms?