

**Question for written answer E-002850/2019**  
**to the Commission**  
Rule 138  
**Kris Peeters (PPE)**

Subject: New initiatives in respect of CRISPR-Cas

European agriculture faces major sustainability challenges. Crops that require less input, that are more resilient to drought and/or that produce higher yields can make an important contribution in this respect. Precision plant-breeding techniques such as CRISPR-Cas can help develop such crops in a much more targeted and faster manner. In Europe, however, the development and use of such crops is blocked by the application of stringent GMO legislation. The Court of Justice ruled in Case C-528/16 that Directive 2001/18 on GMOs is applicable to CRISPR-Cas. As a result, the European plant-breeding sector is deprived of important tools. In the rest of the world, such crops are treated like conventional crops and operators are allowed to place them on the market without hindrance. This gives them a great advantage. The problem in Europe is compounded by the fact that products resulting from precision plant-breeding techniques such as these cannot be detected and products from elsewhere can thus enter the European market undetected.

What initiatives does the European Commission intend to take in order to bring GMO legislation into line with the legislation in the rest of the world, thereby enabling the development and use of such crops?