

**Question for written answer E-002738/2020
to the Commission**
Rule 138
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Subject: Biodegradable products as replacements for plastic waste

30 million tonnes of plastic waste are generated every year in the European Union. This huge amount poses both an environmental and a health problem. European efforts to develop the circular economy are laudable, yet on average a mere 14% of used plastics are collected for recycling. And less than 2% are in a closed loop, i.e. they are recovered to produce a material that can be used as a new plastic. This recycling rate can theoretically reach a maximum of 5% of used plastics. Plastic recycling is not, therefore, the miracle cure for protecting our ecosystem. The major financial efforts called for in the context of Horizon 2020 in order to develop smarter, more recyclable plastics, boost the effectiveness of recycling processes and the tracking and elimination of hazardous substances in recycled plastics are certainly necessary. Everything that might provide an opportunity for French and European agriculture should be taken on board.

This being the case, what research and development work is the EU doing to find biodegradable alternatives (not to be confused with bio-based or compostable plastics), for example ones based on maize?