

**Question for written answer E-000937/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Commission's plans to strengthen European public health and ensure a level playing field for SMEs in the industrial hemp sector

1. In 1997, the Commission's Standing Committee decided that foods containing parts of the hemp plant are not to be considered novel within the scope of Regulation (EC) 258/97. In 2019, however, its stance was altered with an update to the Novel food catalogue, which included entries for Cannabis sativa L. (hemp) and cannabinoids (including CBD), thus putting hemp flowers, leaves and extracts thereof under Regulation 2015/2283 (novel foods). In this regard, what scientific and historical evidence was used in order for the Standing Committee to change its stance?
2. For CBD products, in order to be placed on the market, a safety assessment is currently required, as provided for under Regulation 2015/2283. These safety assessments cost between EUR 350 000 and EUR 500 000. Does the Commission plan to provide assistance for these prohibitively high costs, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises – which are the main economic operators in the sector?
3. Given the ever-growing public consumption of cannabinoids (predominantly CBD): in an effort to ensure the protection of public health and to support science that is the foundation of the hemp sector if it is to compete globally, does the Commission plan to earmark funding under relevant research programmes under the current multiannual financial framework to support scientific findings related to the therapeutic effects of cannabinoids?