



European Plant Science Organisation
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First reaction

EPSO welcomes the European Commission's study regarding the status of novel genomic techniques (NGTs) under Union law

Brussels, 30.4.2021

EPSO greatly supports the study, which cites the substantial link between innovation in plant science and the ambitious goals of the EU claimed in The Green Deal and its Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The use of NGTs in plants can support the transition to a resilient, sustainable and secure agriculture for food and feed production, thereby also contributing to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. The study also underlines the necessity to update the European legislation on GMOs in order to address innovation and biosafety concerns appropriately without preventing scientific and societal progress. Moreover, the legislation must allow Europe to maintain its research and innovation environment among worldwide competition so that Europe can still produce its own food and contribute to food and nutritional security globally.

NGTs and NGT-products have a role to play in the European **Farm-to-Fork** strategy by ensuring sustainable food production and the shift to healthy, sustainable diets, for example through disease-resistant crops (reducing pesticide use) with better water and nutrient use efficiency (lowering water and fertiliser use) that yield allergen-free and nutritious food promoting human health in the light of climate change. They can also contribute to implementation of the European **Biodiversity** strategy by improving the performance and nutritional content of underutilised fruit, vegetable, legume, and cereal crops and thereby substantially increase the diversity of cultivated crops.

EPSO looks forward to engaging as a major stakeholder with the European Commission, as the EC indicated to communicate with Member States, European Parliament and stakeholders to achieve a well-balanced policy action on plants derived from targeted mutagenesis and cisgenesis. EPSO will provide scientific input in the course of the consultations with the EC and other stakeholders.

This first reaction was developed by Ralf Wilhelm, Frank Hartung, Jens Sundström, Alan Schulman, Ernst van den Ende and Karin Metzloff based on discussions at the EPSO Board and Agricultural Technology Working Group Meetings March 2021 and with the EPSO Representatives.

Contacts Ralf Wilhelm & Frank Hartung, JKI / DE, ralf.wilhelm@julius-kuehn.de, frank.hartung@julius-kuehn.de
Jens Sundstrom, SLU Uppsala, jens.sundstrom@slu.se
Alan Schulman, LUKE / FI, Alan.Schulman@Helsinki.fi
Ernst van den Ende, WUR / NL, Ernst.Vandenende@wur.nl
Kari Metzloff, EPSO, Karin.Metzloff@epsomail.org

Useful links

EC: [Study on new genomic techniques](#), 29.4.2021

Court of Justice of the EU: Judgment in Case C-528/16, 25.7.2018. [EN Press Release](#); [Ruling in EN](#):

Court of Justice of the EU: Advocate General's Opinion in Case C-528/16, 18.1.2018. [EN Press Release](#); [Opinion in English](#)

Court of Justice of the EU: [Case C-528/16](#)

EC: [Explanatory Note on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology](#) from EC's High Level Scientific Advice Mechanism, 28.4.2017

EC [news alert](#) Commission's top scientific advisers publish explanatory note on new techniques in agricultural biotechnology, 28.4.2017

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EPSO Working Group on Agricultural Technologies: www.epsoweb.org/agricultural-technologies-wogr

EPSO Statements on agricultural technologies and on the EU Green Deal are for instance:

- EPSO: [Genome editing – Improving legislation and starting flagships to better address climate, environmental, food and health challenges](#), Report 3rd informal science and policy meeting, 16.2.2021
- EPSO: [Statement on the Draft Strategic Research and Innovation Strategy by the Biodiversity Partnership Consortium](#), 29.1.2021
- EPSO statement [Nobel Prize awarded to E Charpentier and J Doudna for genome editing](#), 7.10.2020
- EPSO statement [‘Detecting a point mutation does not clarify its origin’](#), 9.9.2020
- EPSO statement [EFSA draft opinion on directed mutagenesis](#), 25.6.2020
- EPSO: [Statement on the Farm to Fork Strategy by the European Commission](#), 2.6.2020
- EPSO statement [EC study on New Genomic Techniques \(NGTs\)](#), 27.5.2020
- EPSO statement [Farm to Fork Strategy by the European Commission](#), 2.6.2020
- EPSO Statement [First Draft Implementation Strategy for Horizon Europe by the EC](#), 3.6.2020
- EPSO statement on the [French draft decree on mutagenesis](#), 8.7.2020

EPSO communications: www.epsoweb.org/epsoweb-communications

EPSO member institutes and universities: www.epsoweb.org/membership/members

EPSO representatives: www.epsoweb.org/membership/representatives

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than **200 research institutes, departments and universities from 32 countries**, mainly from Europe, and **2.600 individuals Personal Members**, representing over 26 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science including science advice to policy, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. <https://epsoweb.org> | EU Transparency Register Number 38511867304-09