



**Statement**

European Plant Science Organisation  
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## **Welcoming Commissioner Andriukaitis' statement and call for action 'New plant breeding techniques need new regulatory framework'**

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*Brussels, 29.3.2019*

**The European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO) welcomes Commissioner Andriukaitis' statement and call for action 'New plant breeding techniques need new regulatory framework'**

EU health Commissioner Andriukaitis stated in his interview with EURACTIV on 27.3.2019 ([link](#)) "From my point of view, we need a new legal regulatory framework for these new techniques," adding that it should be dealt with by the new European Commission after the EU elections in May. He added "We are currently analysing the ruling and discussing with member states its implementation". Further on in the interview he insisted that Europe should listen to science, otherwise "it has no chance to have sustainable agriculture and preserve biodiversity".

**EPSO repeats its offer to collaborate with policy makers to develop an appropriate future-ready regulation to enable the European public sector, small- and medium-sized companies and farmers to contribute more comprehensively to food and nutritional security and to use all available tools to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture. Notwithstanding the technical option retained, EPSO supports a science-based revision of the present European legislation establishing a more proportionate product-based risk assessment. EPSO is also willing to contribute to the societal debate on genome editing and to communicate in a fact-based and yet accessible manner about innovative plant science and its societal role.**

Background:

[EPSO publishes its statement to the ruling of the European Court of Justice \(ECJ\) on organisms obtained by mutagenesis](#) (case C-528/16) stating that the ruling disregards scientific evidence. Genome editing is not the only answer to current challenges of agriculture and society, but it represents an important tool for harnessing plant science knowledge toward a future-ready agriculture, for allowing Europe to play a leading role in innovative plant science, and to contribute to the bioeconomy by boosting the performance of underutilised plant species and biological resources. In the drive to achieve sustainable development goals, no useful tool should be neglected. EPSO supports a science-based change to the present European legislation and proposes to establish a legislation adapted to future technological developments by increasing emphasis on product-based risk assessment. Meanwhile, further tangible commitment

is needed to support, inform and communicate about innovative plant science and its societal role.

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

*This statement was developed by the EPSO Agricultural Technology Working Group chairs Peter Rogowsky, Frank Hartung and Ralf Wilhelm, with Karin Metzloff, based on the discussion at the Working Group Meeting in Milano on 27.3.2019 and the EPSO statement of 19.2.2019 endorsed by all EPSO Representatives.*

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#### Useful links

EURACTIV interview with Commissioner Andriukaitis, 27.3.2019 [link](#)

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

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

Statements drafted by this group and approved by the EPSO representatives are for instance:

- EPSO: [Statement on the Court of Justice of the EU ruling regarding mutagenesis and the GMO Directive](#), 19.2.2019; (case C-528/16)
- EPSO updated statement on [Crop Genetic Improvement Technologies](#), 12.01.2017
- EPSO: [First reaction on the Advocate General's Opinion regarding mutagenesis and the Genetically Modified Organisms Directive](#), 18.1.2018
- EPSO: [Opinion on the SAM Explanatory Note on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology](#), 15.9.2017
- EPSO: [Synthetic Biology should not be confused with the application of new breeding techniques](#), updated statement, 30.8.2017
- EPSO: [Comment on the report of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology](#), 8.3.2018, [original report of the AHTEG and all submitted comments](#).

EPSO communications: <https://epsoweb.org/news/>

EPSO member institutes and universities: <https://epsoweb.org/about-epsos/epsos-members/>

EPSO representatives: <https://epsoweb.org/about-epsos/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 30 countries, mainly from Europe, and 2.600 individual 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