

*Contribution to briefing for meeting of DG Anne Bucher with Finnish Deputy Permanent Representative, Minna Kivimäki (SANTE 4825)*

**AGRIFISH Council priorities – New breeding techniques – request for regulation**

[REDACTED] Finland has not opted out on the cultivation of GMOs, although no GMOs are cultivated.

[REDACTED]

Finland will hold a discussion in the Working Party in the autumn to prepare a request to the Commission to come forward with a proposal to regulate new breeding techniques under Article 241 TFEU (*“The Council, acting by a simple majority, may request the Commission to undertake any studies the Council considers desirable for the attainment of the common objectives, and to submit to it any appropriate proposals. If the Commission does not submit a proposal, it shall inform the Council of the reasons”*).

The Finnish authorities have provided information to SANTE on the implementation of the Court ruling on new mutagenesis techniques. This relates to approaches and challenges in the supervision of organisms modified with new mutagenesis techniques. The Finnish authorities have also asked the Commission for legal clarification on the interpretation of the GM legislation regarding certain types of mutagenesis as well as on certain aspects on the Court ruling.

During 2018, the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland and the Advisory Board for Biotechnology brought up in their reports the need to update the regulation of genetic technologies. The Finnish Bioindustries FIB (Finland’s biotechnology industry association) consider that in Finland the consequences of the ECJ decision are likely to primarily affect the plant breeding sector. Universities Finland UNIFI (a co-operational organisation for Finnish universities) has expressed their concern about the consequences of the ECJ decision.

**Lines to take**

- Show interest in hearing Finland’s views on how they see the future of biotechnology in Europe including its governance.
- Confirm our understanding that Finland will invite the Commission to come forward with a proposal to regulate new breeding techniques under Article 241 TFEU.
- Note that any decision on a future proposal in this field is for the next Commission.

- Note that there needs to be clear and strong support from the Council before the next Commission could take any action. Furthermore, the Council should clearly indicate what kind of policy it would like to pursue.