

To the EU-  
Commissioner  
Nicolas Schmit  
41, rue de la loi  
1000 Bruxelles

Esch-sur-Alzette, 5 December 2019

## **European Green Deal – ensure there is no mention of “new breeding techniques”**

Dear Mr. Nicolas Schmit,

We talked earlier about new GMOs derived from so-called “genome editing techniques” such as CRISPR/Cas, TALENs, ODM etc.

Now it turns out the European Commission could mention action on these new GMOs already in its Communication on the European Green Deal on 11 December. An early summary circulated among PermReps in Brussels included a point on “addressing the Court’s ruling on new breeding techniques”.

Please could you ask, Mr. Nicolas Schmit, to ensure the Commission's European Green Deal Communication does not mention any action on “new breeding techniques” (industry term), “precision breeding” (another industry term), “new techniques in biotechnology” (Commission term), “new mutagenesis techniques” (ECJ term) or “novel genomic techniques” (Council term).

Agrichemical corporations like Dow (Corteva), Bayer and Syngenta, food business lobby groups and GMO developers are lobbying the Commission to exclude GMOs derived from genome editing from EU GMO regulations.

Their lobby campaign follows a ruling by the European Court of Justice of 25 July 2018 which confirmed that products derived from genome editing are covered by the EU's GMO regulations.


Environmental and farmer groups, together with the organic sector, as well as food retailers and food manufacturers (e.g. REWE, Edeka and Spar) and scientists are asking for a full implementation of the ruling.

If GMOs derived from genome editing were to be taken out of the EU's GMO regulations this would mean that EU requirements for risk assessment, traceability and labelling no longer apply to them. However, these new GMOs come with many risks and uncertainties, therefore they need to be subject to risk assessment. Consumers, breeders and farmers want to be able to avoid GMOs, so these new GMOs need to be traceable and labelled.

The exclusion of these products from the EU's GMO regulations would expose people's health and the environment to potential harm and make it impossible to avoid them, thereby removing choice from farmers and consumers.

Importantly, taking up the industry's demands on new GMOs in the Commission's European Green Deal would run counter to the Green Deal's sustainability objective and unnecessarily expose the Commission to criticism.

Therefore the Commission should not make any commitment to "addressing the Court's ruling on new breeding techniques" or similar in its Communication. It should hear all sides first, and carefully weigh the arguments before making any decision.



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