


Contribution to the briefing for the Director-General of DG SANTE for the video conference with Ms Kasch, State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) on 2. 04.2020 (SANTE 5030)



New genomic techniques

State of play/background information

Further to the Council's Decision on a study regarding the status of "novel genomic techniques", DG SANTE holds targeted consultations of Member States and a wide range of EU-level stakeholder organisations to gather information and data to feed into the study. Replies from MS and stakeholders are due by end April and mid-May 2020 respectively. It is very likely that we will need further clarification and substantiation from both Member States and stakeholders later in the year 2020 (final Commission study due by end April 2021).



In a letter to DG SANTE in 2015¹, BMEL expressed concerns on the impact that the GM legislation (covering the new techniques) could have on SMEs, research and trade. In another letter of 2017, BMEL informed DG SANTE of their national dialogues on new technologies in molecular biology/genome editing². In 2019, BfR (risk assessment institute under BMEL) organised a consumer conference on genome editing. The dialogues held so far have rather highlighted various challenges (notably of weighing opportunities and risks, of combining the precautionary principle with the innovation principle at national or EU level) without clear conclusions and consensus.

At the May 2019 AGRIFISH Council, Germany supported the Dutch proposal to ask the Commission to work underlining the importance of a comprehensive debate allowing sufficient time for all interested parties to position themselves and the need to keep high health and environmental standards.

Lines to take

- Refer to the Green Deal and the message that the EU needs "to develop innovative ways to protect harvests from pests and diseases and to consider the potential role of new innovative techniques to improve the sustainability of the food system, while ensuring that they are safe".
- Inform that to carry out the study requested by the Council DG SANTE is holding consultations with Member States and stakeholders on the draft questionnaires. In

¹ Ares(2015)4092059

² Ares(2017)4730708

this regard, DG SANTE is keen in ensuring the questions are balanced and open to avoid any bias and ensure the stakeholders position themselves clearly.

- Encourage German authorities to provide clear replies with substantiated information and data. It is important Member States' contributions feed into the study in the most useful and complete way as possible.