

Contribution to briefing for Commissioner Kyriakides for a meeting with The Green 10 environmental ONGs on 10-02-2020 (CAB-70)

New genomic techniques in the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy

Speaking points

- Inform that the European Green Deal mentions clearly 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.
- Stress that the Commission should therefore remain open to explore the role of biotechnology and its potential to contribute to sustainable food systems. To this effect, the **study** requested by the Council on new genomic techniques provides an opportunity to assess the status of these techniques.
- Strongly encourage the Green 10 to provide substantiated information and data in the consultation on the study on new genomic techniques.
- Clarify that any potential policy action in this field – as a follow up to the study – will be assessed at a later stage by the Commission.

State of play/background information

In December 2019, **Greenpeace** asked in a letter (see in annex) to President von der Leyen that the Commission should not promote new genomic techniques as part of the European Green Deal. Greenpeace asked the Commission to uphold and apply EU law designed to protect public health and the environment, such as the EU legislation on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO). Similarly, **Friends of the Earth Europe** claimed that agrichemical corporations were lobbying the Commission to exclude GMOs derived from genome editing from the GMO legislation and they urged to remove corporate interests from the European Green Deal.

In November 2019, the Council adopted a Decision requesting a **Commission study**, by 30 April 2021, on the status of certain new innovative breeding techniques (“novel genomic techniques”). The study may be followed by a proposal. DG SANTE is now holding targeted consultations with Member States and a wide range of EU-level stakeholder organisations.

Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth Europe and the European Environmental Bureau have confirmed their interest, whereas Birdlife Europe, and Health and Environment Alliance have not.