

Subject: BTO meeting Commissioner Andriukaitis with VIB and Max Planck Institute on new mutagenesis techniques - 10/12/2018

BTO meeting Commissioner Andriukaitis with representatives of VIB (Vlaams Instituut voor Biotechnologie, BE) and Max Planck Institute (DE) – 10/12/2018

Participants:

- [REDACTED], VIB.
- [REDACTED] Max Planck Institute for Plant Breeding in Cologne.
- European Commission: Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, Nathalie Chaze.
- DG SANTE: [REDACTED] (E3).

The meeting was requested by the representatives of VIB and Max Planck Institute to discuss the follow-up to the Court of Justice of the EU ruling in case C-528/16 on new mutagenesis techniques.

The representatives of VIB and Max Planck Institute:

- Provided information on research interest and ongoing activities involving new mutagenesis techniques on plants, animals and microorganisms.
- Explained the advantages of new techniques in terms of precision and efficiency.
- Emphasised that these techniques can be used to produce organisms undistinguishable from those produced by conventional techniques, but in a faster and more efficient manner.
- Raised the concern that only large multinationals can afford the implementation of the GMO legislation and tend to invest on traits which are very profitable to them.
- Referred to the position paper recently signed by around 100 research centers, calling upon European policy makers to safeguard innovation in plant science and agriculture.
- Emphasised the challenges to identify products of new mutagenesis techniques and the implications for trade.
- Pointed out the different GMO definition under the GMO legislation and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.
- Requested that the Commission and Member States include in the political agenda the need for a small change in the GMO legislation to safeguard new mutagenesis techniques.
- Expressed their availability to contribute to and inform future debates on the topic.

Commissioner Andriukaitis:

- Recalled the initiatives taken by the Commission on new breeding techniques, in particular the explanatory note of the Scientific Advice Mechanism and the High level conference organised in 2017.
- Emphasised the need for innovative technologies to focus on relevant objectives, such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and address societal challenges such as climate change.
- Encouraged the scientific community to engage with other stakeholders, including consumers, farmers and regulators at both EU and national level.

- Invited representatives of research institutions to showcase practical examples of products developed or under development for a possible event to be organised to foster a genuine discussion on the topic.