

Statements on genome editing

Scientific community:

- Letter to the European Commission by **EU-SAGE**

“Europe cannot afford to miss out on the important opportunities that genome editing offers for sustainable agriculture and food production. Strong political signals of commitment to solve the current regulatory deadlock are necessary to prevent irreversible damage to our European economy and to the transition to a green economy”

- Statement by the **Group of Chief Scientific Advisors (SAM)** - A Scientific Perspective on the Regulatory Status of Products Derived from Gene Editing and the Implications for the GMO Directive

“...in view of the Court’s ruling, it becomes evident that new scientific knowledge and recent technical developments have made the GMO Directive no longer fit for purpose.”

“...we recommend revising the existing GMO Directive to reflect current knowledge and scientific evidence, in particular on gene editing and established techniques of genetic modification. This should be done with reference to other legislation relevant to food safety and environmental protection.

- **European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO)** - Statement on the ECJ Ruling regarding mutagenesis and the Genetically Modified Organisms Directive

“The ruling of the ECJ presents a considerable drawback for the future of innovative plant science and its societal benefits in Europe.”

“...EPSO supports a science-based revision of the present European legislation establishing a more proportionate product-based risk assessment.”

- **German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the German Research Foundation (DFG)** - Towards a scientifically justified, differentiated regulation of genome edited plants in the EU

“...the science academies and the DFG see an urgent need to reassess the products of the much more precise and efficient methods of genome editing and to amend European genetic engineering law.”

- **European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC)** - The regulation of genome edited plants in the European Union

“EASAC reaffirms the importance of exploring radical reform and urges the EU Institutions to explore the options recommended by Leopoldina et al. (2019) and others:

- First, to revise the GMO definition/exemptions to enable the EU to capitalize on the plant breeding opportunities afforded by genome editing.
 - Secondly, to develop a new legal framework to focus on traits not processes.”
- Gene editing regulations: A position paper from the **European Federation of Biotechnology** (EFB)

“The European Federation of Biotechnology regrets this ruling because it ignores scientific arguments that the interpretations of the technologies are scientifically inaccurate.”

European seed sector:

- **Euroseeds** position paper - Plant Breeding Innovation Applying the latest Plant Breeding Methods for the benefit of sustainable Agriculture, Consumers and Society,

“ESA (European Seed Association) considers that the consequences of this ruling present unacceptable socio-economic risks for European plant breeding, for the wider agri-food chain, for consumers and for our European environment.”

“The ECJ ruling shows that the existing GMO legislation no longer reflects current knowledge and scientific evidence. ESA therefore encourages Commission to apply the above-mentioned criteria and update the EU’s current regulatory framework accordingly.”

European farmers and agri-cooperatives:

- **Copa Cogeca** - NBTs are not a luxury but an urgent necessity for the vitality of the whole EU farming model

“...last year’s ruling by the European Court of Justice is already having serious repercussions on the strategy of European breeders.”

“New Breeding Techniques (NBTs) should be a priority within the Work Programme of the new Commission when it comes to agriculture. For Copa and Cogeca, it is now a matter of urgency that a real European strategy regarding these highly promising techniques is put in place, as they would ensure that our farming model is able to adapt to both the early effects of climate change and fierce international competition.”

European Advisory Committees on Biosafety:

- **Advice of European Advisory Committees on Biosafety**

“It was agreed that an improved regulation is needed which focuses more on the result of the genetic modification than on the way this modification has been achieved. An adaptation should take into account the decades-long national and international experience with genetic engineering gained so far, the similarity of products derived from natural, classical and targeted mutagenesis, and the practical availability of tools for law enforcement and control.”

Consumers:

- **Consumer Choice Center (CCC)** - Letter to Commissioner Kyriakides

“The European Union has traditionally objected most innovations in food science and prevented European consumers from accessing biologically-enhanced food. This can be seen in the very limited number of genetically modified crops authorized for cultivation in the EU, and a very cumbersome and expensive process of importing genetically modified food and a recent European Court of Justice ruling on treating gene editing as restrictive as GMOs.”

Ethical perspective:

- **The Danish Council of Ethics** - GMO and ethics in the new era

“The Council provides recommendations on the question of whether it would be ethically problematic to reject GMOs with beneficial traits provided they are not assessed as posing a higher risk to humans or the environment than similar varieties developed by conventional methods. The Council’s opinion moreover implicates recommendations for a change of the EU’s authorization system for GMOs and other plants with new traits.”