

OPPOTUNITY

Following the press release on February 7, 2024 from the European Parliament

New Genomic Techniques: MEPs back rules to support green transition of farmers | News | European Parliament (europa.eu)

To who it may concern,

Project Oppotunity (a majority of the key players of the European potato starch value chain) is happy to have a majority of the EU-Parliament on their side, striving to have the new NGT Regulation approved soonest.

In short:

For Category 1 and Category 2 NGT plants, we welcome the MEPs positive vote for a new regulation that distinguish the conventional like plants from non-conventional outcome of edits and appreciate the clarifications made.

Unfortunately, mandatory labelling for all products from NGT plants is requested, this would lead to an unnecessary complication and thus cost in the value chain in order to separate product streams. From an industrial standpoint, a demand to label all products containing an ingredient from an NGT plant would therefore in reality stop the use of that ingredient. A seed labelling and a public register serves the need for transparency sufficiently, as was proposed by the commission.

A monitoring plan for category 1 will again make a difference between plants produced by NGT and conventional plants although the conclusion according to the commission proposal and EFSA is that they are equal.

A traceability requirement for Category 1 NGTs will not be relevant, neither methodology specific, and therefore not feasible to use for distinguishing the same type of edits that comes from traditional breeding methods, NGTs or spontaneous mutations.

We regret the position of the MEPs to include regulation of patents as an amendment in the proposal. This suggestion will slow down innovation substantially.

We propose to maintain the proposal from the commission as suggested and only have a legislative proposal to update EU rules on intellectual property rights accordingly after the report by June 2025 on the impact of patents in this area. The system with Breeders rights on new plant varieties and the Breeders exemption where a new registered variety can immediately be used by other breeders for further breeding has served Europe well.

This leaner approach would not slow down the adoption of the proposed NGT regulation, provide sufficient legal certainty and enable a more competitive and sustainable starch potato cultivation- and industry.

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