

New methods used in genetic engineering need to be regulated!

Joint open letter to the EU Commission

22 January 2015. In a joint open letter to the EU Commission, Testbiotech together with several other organisations, is demanding that products derived from new methods of genetic engineering for plants and animals should be risk assessed and labelled. The methods include oligonucleotide techniques, nucleases (DNA scissors) and direct interventions in gene regulation (epigenetics). The regulatory status of some of these techniques is controversial.

As explained in a Testbiotech backgrounder, the emergence of new techniques coincides with the development of high speed DNA-synthesis, allowing for major changes in the genome, even without any natural template. These new techniques have the potential to radically change the genome.

While the the US allows some genetically engineered organisms to enter the environment and be placed on the market without any risk assessment, the EU takes a more coherent approach and seeks to regulate all organisms produced by techniques involving the direct introduction into an organism of material prepared outside the organism. Products derived from these techniques have to be labelled. Amongst the organisations supporting the letter are Friends of The Earth and Greenpeace. They are demanding that the principles of transparency, traceability and precaution should be maintained and strengthened.

Further information: [Testbiotech Backgrounder on Synthetic Genome Technologies](#) [1]
[Open letter to the EU Commission](#) [2]

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