Testbiotech calls for strict regulations on synthetic biology´s products

International appeal launched
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Munich

Testbiotech has issued warnings on the risks posed by synthetic biology to the environment and has launched an international appeal demanding strict legal regulations. The awareness of technical developments which allow the creation of artificial life forms have led to this call for higher standards to protect human health and the environment. The release of synthetic organisms into the environment must be prevented, and companies dealing in this kind of technology must be subjected to permanent and effective monitoring. Furthermore, there should be a moratorium on any public funding until such time as legal regulations are in place.

By taking the initiative, Testbiotech aims to stimulate broad public debate. The list of signatories joining the appeal will be handed over to institutions such as the UN, which has proclaimed the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. Several organisations have already pledged their support.
“Our aim is to support society in controlling these technical developments rather than let it be a victim of economic interests or simply a matter of fact. So far, there is insufficient regulation for the protection of human health and the environment. We need broad public debate and strict legal regulations”, explains Christoph Then, executive director of Testbiotech.

Broder Breckling from the University of Bremen is one of the experts to join the appeal. He took part in the Testbiotech media conference and called especially for measures to protect biodiversity saying that, “existing biodiversity and the dynamic evolutionary process can be endangered by introducing artificial genes and organisms.
Its long-term impact cannot be assessed. This is already true for some applications in current genetic engineering, but in the context of synthetic biology these risks are even more relevant”.

Besides initiating the appeal, Testbiotech has published a report on synthetic biology in German. The report discusses risks, research activity and new concepts for the protection of biological integrity. Both the report and the appeal can be viewed at www.testbiotech.org [1]

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Appeal_Synbiol.pdf [3]	222.92 KB

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