

## EU Commission starts consultation on New GE

Biased questions indicate expected outcome

6 May 2022 / The EU Commission has started a consultation on the future regulation of New GE (new genomic techniques). However, it seems that the outcome has already been more or less decided: the Commission is planning to exempt many genetically engineered plants from a mandatory approval process through 'deregulation'. This is apparent from the way in which many of the questions are formulated, and indicates that the aim of any future legislation will be to accelerate the introduction of the plants onto the market.

Testbiotech is warning against such direct bias in the consultation process: in essence, loaded questions are being used to support the EU Commission's arguments for deregulation, irrespective of any answers given.

The Commission is considering only very few questions relating to the risk assessment of New GE, and thereby assuming that it is sufficient to only assess the intended plant traits. On this basis, the Commission plans put genetically engineered plants into new categories, i.e. the so-called risk profiles. Genetically engineered plants whose risks are seemingly no greater than those of conventionally bred plants would, therefore, no longer need to undergo risk assessment.

The Commission is thus ignoring the risks associated with unintended genetic changes on the basis of a one-sided choice of sources. Scientific publications, however, provide enough evidence that, amongst others, CRISPR/Cas applications do indeed have unintended effects which generate specific risks. Independent risk assessment is therefore vital to assess such risks.

Instead of placing sufficient weight on the risks, the EU Commission is primarily directing the attention of the public to the potential benefits of the genetically engineered plants. Most of the questions are directed at the latter. The problem: the supposed benefits have neither been independently nor systematically assessed. In addition, the issue of seed patents, which is crucial for the economic impact of New GE, has deliberately been excluded from the consultation process.

Nevertheless, Testbiotech still plans to participate in the consultation and also address its failings. Testbiotech will also demand a detailed assessment of the risks as well as of the claimed benefits of the genetically engineered plants. If the Commission proposes a change in current regulation after the consultation, Testbiotech will request that standards of risk assessment are raised and push for the introduction of a comprehensive technology assessment to close the gaps in current practice.

Contact:

Christoph Then, [info@testbiotech.de](mailto:info@testbiotech.de) [1], Tel +49 15154638040

**Further information:** [The consultation](#) [2]

[Report on risks of New GE \(Testbiotech/CBAN\)](#) [3]

**Source URL:** <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/news/eu-commission-starts-consultation-new-ge>

### Links

[1] <mailto:info@testbiotech.de>

[2] [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13119-Legislation-for-plants-produced-by-certain-new-genomic-techniques\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13119-Legislation-for-plants-produced-by-certain-new-genomic-techniques_en)

[3] <https://www.testbiotech.org/content/unintended-effects-new-genetic-engineering-new-hazards->

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