

## What Members of the European Parliament should consider when discussing New Genetic Engineering (New GE) with STOA

**Subtitle:** TESTBIOTECH Background 12 - 4 - 2021

The Panel for the Future of Science and Technology (STOA) is a service providing committees and other parliamentary bodies in the European Parliament with independent, impartial and accessible information relating to developments in science and technology, including the opportunities they offer alongside the risks and ethical implications. New technological developments in biotechnology, such as the CRISPR/Cas gene scissors, are part of its mandate. On 15 April 2021, STOA will hold an online conference on the genome editing of plants.

STOA carried out a stakeholder consultation on genome editing in plants ahead of the event. There is however no sign that it will publish any of the submitted comments. In the interests of transparency, Testbiotech has therefore decided to publicize its input to this consultation as a background. Our input shows that current GMO regulation is clearly sufficient in regard to genome edited plants.

At the same time, Testbiotech has some concerns that the STOA conference programme might not be sufficiently well-balanced: according the draft programme, there are several members of an international lobby organisation (PRRI) among the speakers who are known for their advocacy of the biotech industry. In addition, the keynote speaker is known to have filed patent applications covering gene editing that are licensed exclusively to a large biotech company (Corteva/ DowDupont). These concerns regarding the speakers were communicated to STOA members in a joint Testbiotech and Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO) letter sent before the conference. The findings are presented in the second part of this background.

A section relating to gene edited plants in a recent European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) report will be presented during the conference. Testbiotech analysed this section of the report and concluded that it is not sufficiently science-based. We therefore recommend that it is reviewed by independent scientists not involved in its compilation and who are free of any interests in the application of the technology.

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[Testbiotech Background STOA and New GE\\_v2.pdf](#) [1]

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**Themen:** [Independence of public research and regulatory authorities](#) [2]

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