

Still no general approach on NGTs in Council – standstill further delays access to latest innovations for Europe’s plant breeders and farmers

Brussels, 26th June 2024

Euroseeds is very disappointed that EU Member States (today) again failed to agree a general approach to the Commission’s proposal for a new Regulation on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs). Despite efforts by the Spanish and Belgian presidencies, no consensus was reached. Euroseeds urges urgent action to establish a differentiated regulatory approach for NGTs in Europe to support innovation and maintain competitiveness.

We acknowledge the continuous efforts of first the Spanish and now the Belgian presidency, developing a wide range of compromise proposals on different elements of the proposal, including around the controversial subject of intellectual property protection of NGT plants. Despite all these efforts, Member States still were unable to arrive at the required majority due to differences of views on patentability of NGT-derived innovations.

Euroseeds reiterates that the seed sector strongly supports the Commission’s commitment to assess, as part of a broader market analysis, the impact that the patenting of plants and related licensing and transparency practices may have on innovation in plant breeding. “The outcome of this study will help to support further policy action and possible regulatory measures to promote efficient protection of plant related innovations, without obstructing access to progress”, says Euroseeds Secretary General, Garlich von Essen.

At the same time, the world around Europe is moving ahead. More and more countries are establishing enabling regulatory frameworks that authorise conventional-like NGT plants without any additional restrictions and requirements. “The more the decision-making process gets delayed in Europe, the more our researchers, breeders and farmers are losing out on progress and competitiveness”, comments von Essen.

Euroseeds therefore reiterates the importance and urgency for a differentiated regulatory approach for NGTs to be established in Europe to bring the continent into line with scientific consensus and practices of partners worldwide.

“We ask Members States to urgently act in favour of plant breeding innovation in Europe and to provide the necessary legal certainty for all parties involved to support the much-needed progress in research and product development”, von Essen concludes.



Avenue des Arts 52
1000 Brussels

www.euroseeds.eu

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