

Press release

400.000+ Europeans oppose push for deregulating new GMOs

Brussels, 7 February 2023

A coalition of 50+ organisations in 17 EU member states today deliver [a petition](#) to the European Commission demanding to keep the new generation of genetically modified organisms 'regulated and labelled' (1). The petition ran from April to November 2022 and received 420.000 signatures.

European Commission-president Ursula Von der Leyen announced in her last state of Union speech as well as in the 2023 Work programme that a legislative proposal on what is being called 'new genomic techniques' (NGTs such as Crispr cas) would be launched. This proposal is expected to be announced on June 7th and will exclude new GMOs such as crispr cas, from the approval processes of the existing EU GMO legislation.

Clara Behr, Head of Policy and Public Relations the Biodynamic Federation Demeter International said: "Excluding new GMOs would prevent farmers, food producers, retailers, and citizens from opting for GM-free choices. We have the right to decide what we eat and grow in our fields!"

The organisers of the petition claim that there is overwhelming support from EU-citizens and independent scientists to keep the new generation of GM-products regulated with requirements around biosafety-assessment, traceability and labelling, in line with the precautionary principle.

Mute Schimpf, food and farming campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe said: "The European Commission seems ready to gamble with our food, but the European Court of Justice's 2018 ruling makes it clear that the so-called 'new genomic techniques' are in fact GMOs and should remain regulated under the current GMO law. European decision makers must echo this ECJ ruling and uphold

mandatory safety checks, transparency and labelling for all GMOs to guarantee protect consumers and farmers' right to choose what they eat and grow."

Madeleine Coste, policy officer at Slow Food Europe said:

"There is no scientific consensus on the safety of these new products. So, it makes common and scientific sense that all GMOs undergo a strict safety evaluation and be labelled as genetically modified, to ensure transparency throughout the whole supply chain for citizens and farmers. Also, more research must be carried out on the environmental, biodiversity and health risks of new GMOs, on their socio-economic impacts for farmers and the food system, and on the development of detection methods."

Nina Holland , researcher at CEO said: "A few big chemical and seed corporations are pushing the EU to allow new GMOs onto the market unchecked. These companies have been lobbying the European Commission for years to exclude new GMOs from the EU-regulation, making unsubstantiated claims on the supposed benefits for sustainability. But as they also hold patents on the seeds engineered with these techniques, their true motivation remains to increase their profits."

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Notes to the editor:

- 1. The following NGO's organise an action starting at 13h today at Place Luxembourg, Brussels: Biodynamic Federation Demeter International, Slow Food Europe, FOEE, CEO, We Move EU, Nature & Progrès Belgium and Pollinis.
- The action will be joined by officials of the European Commission and members of the European Parliament. Pictures of the action will be available shortly after the action [here](#)
- The coalition demands that European decision makers promote and support proven solutions for a sustainable and

climate-resilient agriculture, such as agroecological practices and organic farming, and to protect the freedom of breeders to operate without being restricted by the far-reaching scope of patents on seeds produced with new GMOs.

- Demeter Briefing here: [GMO-free Agriculture - Demeter International](#)
- A briefing on the risks of further increased seed market concentration: [Exposed: How biotech giants use patents and new GMOs to control the future of food | Corporate Europe Observatory](#)
- A report on scientific conflict of interests. the lobby is increasingly driven by GM researchers and institutes with links to industry or with vested interests. New data reveal that a significant number of researchers that actively lobby for deregulation have a conflict of interest: [Researchers with vested interests lobbying to undermine GMO safety rules | Corporate Europe Observatory](#)
- A briefing on the environmental risks of new GMOs: [New GMOs, a risky distraction to climate and food security | Friends of the Earth Europe](#)