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Press Release: European Commission recognizes that New Genomic Technologies products are in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal

4.5. 2021

Tbilisi, 4 May 2021

The UEAA welcomes the eagerly awaited note on the study of the E U Commission on **New Genomic Techniques (N G T)**.

https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/modern_biotech/new-genomic-techniques_en
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In its UEAA Position Paper dated 5 November, it was concluded:

“Noting that current regulations hinder public and private research from being applied to agriculture and the marketing of new genome editing products, the U E A A stresses the need for new rules to give European public and private institutions the tools of innovation necessary to safeguard the interests of the European Union and its Member States, its independence and thus pave the way for a future of progress.”

The UEAA notes with satisfaction that this E U Commission report states that ;

“There are strong indications that the applicable legislation is not fit for purpose for some NGTs and their products, and that it needs to be adapted to scientific and technological progress”.

The second concern of U E A A was that the new regulation should be an incentive to generate both private and public research on NGT’s. Although not stated quite as clearly, the study does mention with satisfaction the necessary involvement of European research on these N G T:

“The study (EU Commission study) has confirmed that NGT products have the potential to contribute to sustainable agri-food systems in line with the objectives of the European Green Deal (https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en) and Farm to Fork Strategy (https://ec.europa.eu/food/farm2fork_en)”.

The scope of the study covered the use of New Genomic Techniques in plants, animals and micro-organisms but in reality, it mainly addresses the plant New Breeding Technologies only, including mutagenesis, cis-/intrageneration and epigenetics. On to this statement, the

Commission's open-mindedness is somewhat reassuring at this stage.

However, it is regrettable that the text has so little regard for the production animals which are barely touched upon in the text of the study. In particular, there is no mention of the important potential of using these techniques to consider for production animals suitable prophylactic measures against enzootic or panzootic infectious diseases, particularly in the case of zoonoses.

And subsequently and quite unfortunately, the study indicates that“:

“For other organisms (animals and microorganisms) and other new genomic techniques, the Commission intends to continue to build up the required scientific knowledge, in view of possible further policy actions. These other organisms will remain, at this stage, subject to the current GMO legal framework”.

There will be now onwards very intense discussions and debates within the E U but UEAA is convinced more than ever, that European agriculture must rely on new technologies and innovation to produce more and better in order to provide citizens with sufficient food at affordable prices while preserving our environment.