

PRESS RELEASE

The organic movement calls to maintain and correctly implement the GMO legislation

BRUSSELS, 24 JULY 2019 – One year ago, on 25 July 2018, [the European Court of Justice issued a landmark decision](#) clarifying that plants modified using new genetic engineering techniques with no long record of safety are indeed genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and must be regulated as such.

The organic food and farming movement reiterates that it is crucial to ensure that risk assessment, traceability and labelling apply to all GMOs and all genetic engineering techniques.

If new genetic engineering techniques would be out of the scope of the EU legislation on GMOs, it would lead to the release of genetically modified organisms in the environment and the food chain without assessment, prior authorization and traceability. Such a situation would make it almost impossible for organic farmers and conventional GMO-free farmers to exclude the presence of GMOs in their production process and to live up to the expectations of consumers.

Any attempt to exclude plants modified with new genetic engineering techniques from the current GMO-legislation would go against the freedom of choice of consumers, farmers and processors not to have GMOs in their food. It would contradict with the European Union's objectives of protection of the environment and human health. And finally, it would be contrary to the intent of the legislator to create a protective legal framework regarding the genetic modification of living organisms.

“Implementing the European Court of Justice's decision means following the precautionary principle and taking consumer and environmental protection seriously,” stresses Thomas Fertl, IFOAM EU Board Member and sector representative for farming. “This is what the European Commission and Member States' authorities need to focus on.”

Ends.

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IFOAM EU represents more than 210 member organisations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies