

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN ORGANIC MOVEMENT RESOLUTION: NO HIDDEN GMOs, SYSTEM-BASED APPROACH TO INNOVATION

BRUSSELS, 22 JUNE 2023 – In a resolution adopted yesterday at its General Assembly, [the European organic movement re-affirms that organic production should remain free from GMOs including from New Genomic Techniques](#) (NGTs). It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the possibility of a systemic approach to innovation in agriculture. This resolution comes ahead of the European Commission’s publication of a proposal on New Genomic Techniques, expected on 5 July. European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski, received the resolution during an official handover ceremony, and ensured the organic movement of his vigilance concerning the impact of the NGT proposal on organic farming.

IFOAM Organics Europe’s President Jan Plagge stresses: “To make our food systems truly sustainable, we need to transition away from input-intensive, short-term fixes, which include the promotion of specific technologies with unproven benefits and potential unintended effects and risks. Genetic engineering with its currently still empty sustainability promises, and a narrow focus on specific genes or traits, ignores the complexity of interactions in a given agroecosystem. For decades, the organic movement has been a main driver for nature-based regenerative systems of agroecological innovation. To safeguard this holistic approach to agronomic innovation, EU legislation must protect GMO-free and organic production from contamination, through mandatory traceability all along the production chain and consumers labelling, which are the only way to envisage a real “coexistence”.”

Jan Plagge also warned about the impact of patents on plants and animals associated with NGTs: “New GMOs will contribute to monopolising patents on genetic material in the hands of just a few companies. Traceability is essential to protect breeders and farmers from patents on seeds – a common concern shared by many farmers organizations across the board – and to safeguard the possibility for a more systemic and truly sustainable approach to plant breeding, that fully considers the complexity of agroecosystems.

The [resolution of the organic movement in favour of a system-based approach of innovation and sustainability – Keep organic GMO-free](#) was adopted with an overwhelming majority (97.69% of votes in favour, 2,31% against) at IFOAM Organics Europe’s General Assembly in Brussels on Wednesday 21 June 2023.

Summary of the IFOAM Organics Europe resolution

The resolution re-affirms the demand of organic breeders, farmers, processors, certifiers, traders, and retailers for the preservation of their freedom of choice to remain GMO-free, including GMOs derived from New Genomic Techniques (NGTs). Organic producers also want to fulfil their commitment towards consumers to guarantee a GM-free production process. For that reason, the principle of labelling and traceability enshrined in the current legislation, which allows for the identification of GMOs throughout the supply chain, must be maintained and applied to all NGTs.

Further, the resolution stresses the importance of considering the negative impact of the NGT proposal on patents on plants, seeds, natural traits, and genetic information as a threat to the European model of breeding. The resolution subsequently voices support for the EU policies like the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork, and the EU Biodiversity Strategies which rightfully put organic farming at the core of a transition to sustainable food systems. This is because a sustainable food system depends on a prospering flora and fauna, which depends on the application of the precautionary principle, and the principle of care, health, ecology, and fairness. Thus,

the resolution calls for the promotion of resilient agroecological systems, taking into account the complexity of interactions in nature, rather than relying on short-term technological fixes with unproven benefits and potential unintended risks. Moreover, the resolution presents its severe concerns about the potential exemption from the EU legal framework on GMOs of so-called “conventional-like” NGT crops. Lastly, the resolution demands that the burden of ensuring GM-free production must not fall on GM-free operators.



Handover of the European organic movement’s resolution to Commissioner of Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski by IFOAM Organics Europe President Jan Plagge.

Ends.

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Background information

Useful links

Positions

- [European organic movement's resolution on new GMOs](#)
- Global organic movement position paper on [Compatibility of breeding techniques in organic systems](#)

Other materials

- Read our leaflet and learn why [all techniques of genetic modification must be regulated](#) – available in all European official languages: [\[BG\]](#) [\[CS\]](#) [\[DA\]](#) [\[DE\]](#) [\[EL\]](#) [\[EN\]](#) [\[ES\]](#) [\[ET\]](#) [\[FI\]](#) [\[FR\]](#) [\[HR\]](#) [\[HU\]](#) [\[IT\]](#) [\[LT\]](#) [\[LV\]](#) [\[MT\]](#) [\[NL\]](#) [\[PL\]](#) [\[PT\]](#) [\[RO\]](#) [\[SK\]](#) [\[SL\]](#) [\[SV\]](#)
- [New GMOs – Key resources](#), living article which is updated periodically
- [Young German organic farmers calling for their right to choose](#) (in German – January 2023)
- [Our webpage on old and new GMOs](#)

DISCUSSING GMOs FROM
SCIENTIFIC, ECONOMIC, AND
POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

GMO-FREE EUROPE EVENT

17 NOVEMBER 2022
10:00-13:00 CET
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
FREE, REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Organised by:
IFOAM **SOS**
ORGANICS EUROPE save our seeds

Hosted by:
THE GREENS/EFA **BIOSUISSE**

Made possible by:
Bioland **SALVIA**

Action financed by:
Life

Watch the video on the GMO-free Europe event. During this event, participants discussed GMOs from the scientific, economic and political perspective.

IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. With almost 200 members in 34 European countries, our work spans the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders, and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies.