



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SHOULD UPHOLD BAN FOR ALL NGTS IN ORGANIC IN RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

BRUSSELS, 19 OCTOBER 2023 – IFOAM Organics Europe, the voice for organic food and farming in Europe, is strongly against the changes concerning organic in the rapporteur's [draft report on New Genetic Techniques](#) (NGTs). Crucially, the responsible rapporteur in the ENVI committee proposed to remove the ban of Category 1 NGTs in organic (Article 5(2)). Furthermore, in the draft report, important seed labelling provisions (Article 10) are deleted, which would have been a starting point for transparency at the breeding level.

In June 2023, an overwhelming majority of the European organic movement re-affirmed that the [organic production process should remain free of Genetically Modified Organisms](#) (GMOs). As the European Commission's proposal reflects, [the use of gene editing technologies is not aligned with the principles of organic agriculture](#). Using NGTs in food production can lead to unintended effects, has potential risks, and conflicts with the precautionary principle. Organic producers also want and must fulfil consumers' expectations that no old or new GMOs are used in the organic production process.

Guaranteeing the freedom of choice and the right of organic operators to produce without NGTs can only be effective if it is accompanied by the legal and technical means. These must be embedded in the NGT regulation, rather than in the EU Organic Regulation (2018/848) as some proponents of NGT deregulation argue. The organic movement is against reopening the EU Organic Regulation as this would open the door to undesired changes of other aspects of the long-negotiated regulation. On top of that, it would also prevent much-needed legal clarity and prevent establishing essential safeguards of GM-free production.

Jan Plagge, President of IFOAM Organics Europe strongly argued against NGTs in organic, saying: "The vast majority of the organic sector has been very clear and loud in our demand to keep organic's production process free from gene editing technologies. This is an existential topic within our movement, directly connected to the precautionary principle and the principles of organic farming. But this draft proposal invalidates the view of an entire movement and economic sector. Banning all NGTs from organic production, including Category 1 NGTs, gives organic and GMO-free producers the freedom of choice to grow products without genetic engineering".

Eduardo Cuoco, Director of IFOAM Organics Europe added: "The ban of GMOs in organic production, including GMOs derived from all NGTs, gives consumers the choice to buy products that have not been produced by genetic engineering. Maintaining consumer trust in the organic supply chain integrity is crucial for the success of organic. So, traceability and seed labelling of all GMOs, including NGTs, are of the utmost importance to protect the organic market and reputation of organic products. Allowing NGTs in organic production and failing to provide legal and technical means to ensure GMO-free organic production will undermine consumer trust and put the organic market at risk. We need essential safeguards within the NGT legislative proposal: a ban on NGTs in organic and clear labelling on all products. Only this way can we ensure that any additional financial and legal burden ensuring the GMO-free status of production does not fall on farmers and operators who do not wish to use NGTs. Public policy should not put the burden of precautionary and mitigation measures on the organic sector, as is already the case for residues of synthetic pesticides."

As IFOAM Organics Europe, we urge policymakers to uphold the ban of all GMOs, including Category 1 NGT genetically modified plants in organic production in the ENVI committee report. We believe that the continued growth of the organic food and farming movement in Europe is vital for a transition to healthy and sustainable food systems. We call upon policymakers to prioritize the precautionary principle, the principles of organic farming and the needs of organic operators in their legislative decisions.

Ends.



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Background information

Positions

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

Other materials

- Watch our video and [learn about the issue with novel genomic techniques](#)
- [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](#)

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.

