



## "The European Commission releases a regulatory proposal for plants and new genomic techniques."

The European Commission has just published (Nov 7, 2023) a [regulatory proposal](#) aimed to create a proportionate regulatory environment that would facilitate the use of genome-edited plants in Europe. This proposal opens the road for scientists and breeders to introduce innovation and to develop new varieties that are more resilient, adapted to climate change conditions and are more nutritious. The importance of this news is that opens the way for a regulatory mechanism that will release the strong constraints imposed by the current EU GMO legislation that "di facto" makes it impossible to get a genome edited variety in the market in EU. By proposing this proportionate regulation the Commission not only recognizes the importance of NPBT for the future of agriculture competitiveness in Europe but also addresses the discrimination that plants carrying targeted genomic changes are suffering against those carrying random genomic changes as introduced by random mutagenesis or traditional breeding.

According to the EC proposal plants generated by New Genomic techniques that are equivalent to conventional plants (as defined by Annex I in that proposal) will be category I NGT plant and will not need to follow the GMO rules but rather be subjected to the same regulation that is applied for registration of conventional plant varieties. This process normally requires testing and evaluation as it is done routinely for any new variety. This is an important step forward the normalization of NBT varieties that will result in a dramatic reduction in time and economic costs. The proposal also introduces labeling of the seed so farmers can choose whether or not to include the new materials in their fields. Although the proposal is not completely clear in the criteria for equivalence of NGT and in its current form very open to different interpretations as to the number and type of edits allows is definitely a step forward. Although the regulation will be homogeneously applied to all EU countries it will be up to the member states to determine when a NGT crop fits in category I NGT and it is not clear from the proposal what information is deemed as necessary and sufficient for it. NGT plants and feed and food derived from them will not be accepted in the Eco /Bio market.

Harnesstom prebreeding programs are mostly based on marker assisted breeding where we use variability present in the breeders pool to develop new prebreeding materials that are able to increase their tolerance to biotic and abiotic stress conditions like those associated to climate change and emerging diseases. Still Harnesstom follows closely all regulatory aspects related to breeding and their members consider NBT as an important technology that all scientist and breeders in EU should include in their toolbox for the good of all stakeholders

More information at [https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/genetically-modified-organisms/new-techniques-biotechnology\\_en](https://food.ec.europa.eu/plants/genetically-modified-organisms/new-techniques-biotechnology_en)

