



4 May 2026

## New Genomic Techniques - Upcoming ENVI Vote – Defend the European retail and food industry sector

Dear Members of the Environment Committee,

The Environment Committee will soon vote on the proposed legislation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques (NGTs).

In this second reading vote, the Committee is asked to rubber stamp a trilogue agreement reached in December 2025. However, this agreement fails to adequately protect GMO-free farming and seed breeding and removes citizens' right to know what is in their food. As NGT traits are patented, it also exposes farmers and small seed breeders to patent infringements.

In its first reading position, the European Parliament had introduced essential safeguards such as consumer labelling, traceability, and a ban on patents, to defend the rights of European farmers, breeders, operators and citizens alike. The outcome of the trilogue negotiations falls short of maintaining these essential safeguards. The Environment Committee should now re-introduce these crucial protections, before the proposal is finally adopted.

**We urge you to stand up for the protection and freedom of choice of European retailers, food processors, farmers, breeders and citizens by defending the European Parliament's original position on consumer labelling, traceability and patents.**

### Safeguard traceability and labelling

Freedom of choice is a fundamental principle enshrined in the [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#), encompassing among others the right to conduct business. This includes the right of European retailers, farmers, breeders and food operators to produce and propose GMO- and NGT-free food, along with the right of citizens to choose what they eat.

In its original position the European Parliament had rightfully introduced full supply chain traceability measures and on-package labelling for all NGT products. Both are an essential prerequisite for the European agriculture and food sector. The European food industry both from the organic and conventional sectors strongly supports the preservation of labelling and freedom of choice and calls on policymakers to defend their entrepreneurial freedom (see [here](#)). This is even more important as consumers are sceptical when it comes to GM products and always want to know what they buy.

Therefore, it is crucial for the European Parliament to respect the businesses and citizens of Europe by reinstating clear traceability and labelling provisions in line with its original position.

### **Ensure protection from patents for European farmers and breeders**

As it stands the NGT proposal would increase the consolidation of the seed industry and place a heavy burden on European operators by exposing them to infringement cases. It would hamper the development of new varieties by hindering access to genetic resources, thus accelerating further biodiversity loss (see the [joint statement](#) by more than 200 organisations) and increasing our dependency from the major US and Chinese patent holder companies at a time where the European food and agriculture sector is aiming for more autonomy.

The European Parliament has a long-standing position against patents on seeds. In February 2024, MEPs voted to restrict patents so that patent protection would not extend to genetic material that could also be obtained by conventional breeding. The trilogue agreement fails to ensure this level of protection for farmers and breeders. Patent-related provisions remain voluntary and based on good will by the industry, failing to guarantee the unrestricted use of plant material for breeding. And a [recent study](#) published by the European Commission shows that patents have an important negative impact on small and medium-sized plant breeding companies. Effective measures must therefore be taken now.

The Parliament must therefore stand strong and come back to the measures adopted in first reading for the protection of European businesses.

**The upcoming vote is your last chance to defend European retailers, food processors, farmers, breeders and citizens from the far-reaching negative consequences of the NGT proposal on the European food industry and retail sector. The Parliament must stand up for entrepreneurial freedom and transparency. We count on you!**

Yours sincerely,

The following undersigning European retailers:

Alnatura Produktions- und Handels GmbH

Denree GmbH

DM – Drogerie Markt GmbH & Co

EcorNaturaSì S.p.A. società benefit

Odin De Nieuwe Band BV

Rewe Group

Verband Lebensmittel ohne Gentechnik (VLOG) e.V.