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Delegations will find enclosed the opinion¹ of the Danish Folketing on the above proposal followed by a courtesy English translation.

¹The translation(s) of the opinion may be available on the Interparliamentary EU Information Exchange website (IPEX) at the following address: <https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/document/COM-2023-0411>



FOLKETINGET

Kommissær for sundhed og fødevarer
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Udtalelse om Kommissionens forslag om brugen af nye genomteknikker (NGT) i planteavl

(Udtalelse under den politiske dialog) (KOM(2023)0411)

21. november 2023

J.nr.: xxxxx

Kære Stella Kyriakides

De nye planteforædlingsteknikker (NGT) har potentiale til at øge produktiviteten og reducere forbruget af pesticider i landbruget samt gøre afgrøder mere robuste over for klimaforandringer. Den nye forædlingsteknologi kan vise sig helt afgørende for EU's muligheder for at realisere landbrugets grønne omstilling. Bl.a. skal vi, ifølge den Europæiske Grønne Pagt, halvere brugen af pesticider og genoprette natur på 20 pct. af EU's landarealer inden 2030. Vi har derfor brug for tiltag, som understøtter innovative virksomheder i EU, som kan levere de nødvendige bæredygtige løsninger til landbrugs- og fødevarerindustrien.

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Folketinget vil derfor gerne give udtryk for sin støtte til Kommissionens nye forslag til forordning om reguleringen af planter, fødevarer og foderstoffer fremstillet ved hjælp af nye genomteknikker. Forslaget rummer en række væsentlige forbedringer i forhold til den nuværende GMO-lovgivning i EU. Det gælder navnlig forslaget om, at visse NGT-planter skal kunne anmeldes på lige fod med traditionelt forædlede planter, når de nye tilførte egenskaber også kunne være opstået ad naturens vej eller gennem traditionel forædling. Kommissionens forslag er både nødvendigt og et skridt i den rigtige retning, som ikke må forpasses.

Men der er efter Folketingets opfattelse rum til og brug for at fremme denne udvikling yderligere. Navnlig opfordrer Folketinget Kommissionen til at tage et lignende skridt i forhold til anvendelsen af denne teknik på mikroorganismer, så europæiske virksomheder også vil kunne udnytte det store potentiale, der



findes på dette område. Folketinget er bekendt med, at man afventer en vurdering fra EFSA på området, hvorfor det findes relevant at revidere reguleringen på NGT-mikroorganismer umiddelbart efter denne forelægger, men det er afgørende, at Kommissionens forslag om planter vedtages uden forsinkelse.

NGT-metoden har potentiale til at øge effektiviteten i landbruget betragteligt. Den kan skabe højtydende plantesorter, hvorved mindre landbrugsareal kræves. Det kan styrke den europæiske fødevarer sikkerhed, da mulighederne for at producere fødevarer lokalt øges, hvis nuværende komplikationer såsom klimaforandringer, mere ustadigt vejr og krig i Ukraine imødegås. Derudover er det lovende for den grønne omstilling. Folketinget opfordrer derfor Kommissionen til at sikre, at ændrede rammevilkår for NGT'er også bidrager til et øget fokus fra plantebaserede løsninger. Det bør derfor sikres, at der generelt skabes incitamentter til at udlægge mindre produktivt areal til natur-, klima- og miljøtiltag på dele af det overskydende areal.

Folketinget støtter at holde økologisk produktion ude af forslaget om regulering af NGT-planter, da dette område bedst reguleres i økologiforordningen.

Folketinget fremhæver, at der er en risiko for, at manglende fokus på patentering af nye genteknologier (NGT'er) i lovforslaget kan medføre udfordringer relateret til monopoldannelse inden for afgrødeforædling. Hvis det bliver muligt at patentere afgrøder, der er forædlet ved brug af NGT'er, kan det potentielt hæmme forskning og innovation inden for udviklingen af klimatilpassede og robuste afgrøder, da færre mindre virksomheder og forskere vil kunne forædle videre på de nye varianter af plantesorter. Dette kan i sidste ende reducere graden af lokal tilpasning i medlemslandene. Patentspørgsmålet er imidlertid ikke kun relevant i forhold til NGT-afgrøder, men også konventionelt forædlede afgrøder. Det er derfor positivt, at Kommissionen lægger op til, at NGT-sorter skal reguleres efter de samme regler som traditionelt forædlede sorter inden for det eksisterende UPOV-system. Her kan forædlerundtagelsen bidrage til at støtte udviklingen af nye varianter af plantesorter. Folketinget imødeser derfor den af Kommissionen annoncerede undersøgelse af spørgsmålet om patentering og de mulige konsekvenser heraf.

Folketinget vil også opfordre Kommissionen til at se nærmere på de tidskrævende processer vedrørende EU-godkendelser af nye fødevarer (novel foods). De plantebaserede løsninger er altafgørende for en bæredygtig europæisk fødevarer sektor. Derfor bør biosolution-virksomheder have de bedst mulige vilkår.



Der vil fortsat være behov for de eksisterende godkendelsesprocedurer i EU's gældende GMO-lovgivning, når vi taler om mere komplekse NGT- og GMO-planter, som klart adskiller sig fra naturligt forekommende organismer eller klassiske mutationer.

Brugen af genteknologi i EU bør foregå på en både sikker og etisk forsvarlig måde, men vores europæiske lovgivning må ikke lægge hindringer i vejen for innovative løsninger til landbrugs- og fødevarerindustrien, som kan bidrage til at nå målene i EU's grønne pagt, jord til bord-strategien og FN's verdensmål, samtidig med, at vores virksomheder bliver konkurrencedygtige på det globale marked.

Folketinget ser derfor frem til, at Kommissionen fremlægger "EU's bioteknologi- og biproduktionsinitiativ", som lanceret af Kommissionens formand i sin tale om Unionens tilstand den 13. september 2023. Det er nødvendigt at sikre, at vi i Europa har de nødvendige instrumenter og rammevilkår til at fremme den grønne omstilling.

Med venlig hilsen

Hans Kristian Skibby
Formand for Folketingets Miljø- og Fødevarerudvalg

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FOLKETINGET

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Opinion on the Commission's proposal for a regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed
(Contribution/political dialogue) (Com (2023)0411)

21 November 2023

J.nr.: xxxxx

Dear Stella Kyriakides

The new plant breeding techniques (NGTs) have the potential to enhance productivity and reduce the use of pesticides in agriculture, as well as to make crops more resilient to climate change. The new breeding technology could prove crucial for the EU's opportunities to realize the green transition in agriculture. Among other things, according to the European Green Deal, we must reduce the use of pesticides by 50 % and restore nature to cover at least 20% of the EU's land areas by 2030. We therefore need measures that support innovative companies in the EU, which can deliver the necessary sustainable solutions to the agricultural and food industries.

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The Danish Parliament would therefore like to express its support for the Commission's new proposal for a regulation on plants obtained by new genomic techniques and their food, and feed. The proposal contains a number of significant improvements compared to the current GMO legislation in the EU. This particularly applies to the proposal that certain NGT plants should be able to be reported on an equal footing with traditionally bred plants, when the new added traits could also have arisen naturally or through traditional breeding. The Commission's proposal is both necessary and a step in the right direction, which must not be missed.

However, in Parliament's opinion, there is room for and a need to further promote this development. In particular, Parliament urges the Commission to take a similar step in relation to the use of this technique on microorganisms, so that European companies can also exploit the great potential in this area. Parliament is aware that an assessment from EFSA in this area is awaited, which is why it is relevant to revise the regulation on NGT microorganisms immediately after this is presented, but it is crucial that the Commission's proposal on plants is adopted without delay.



The NGT method has the potential to significantly increase efficiency in agriculture. It can create high-yielding plant varieties, requiring less agricultural land. This can strengthen European food security, as the possibilities for producing food locally increase if current complications such as climate change, more unstable weather, and war in Ukraine are addressed. Moreover, it is promising for the green transition. Parliament therefore urges the Commission to ensure that changed framework conditions for NGTs also contribute to an increased focus on plant-based solutions. It should therefore be ensured that incentives are generally created to allocate less productive land to nature, climate, and environmental measures on parts of the surplus land.

Parliament supports keeping organic production out of the proposal on the regulation of NGT plants, as this area is best regulated in the Organic Products Regulation.

Parliament emphasizes that there is a risk that the lack of focus on patenting new genetic technologies (NGTs) in the legislative proposal may lead to challenges related to monopoly formation within crop breeding. If it becomes possible to patent crops that are bred using NGTs, it could potentially hamper research and innovation in the development of climate-adapted and robust crops, as fewer smaller companies and researchers will be able to breed further on the new variants of plant varieties. This can ultimately reduce the degree of local adaptation in the member states. The patent issue is, however, not only relevant in relation to NGT crops but also conventionally bred crops. It is therefore positive that the Commission proposes that NGT varieties should be regulated according to the same rules as traditionally bred varieties within the existing UPOV system. Here, the breeder's exemption can contribute to supporting the development of new variants of plant varieties. Parliament therefore looks forward to the study announced by the Commission on the issue of patenting and the possible consequences thereof.

Parliament would also urge the Commission to take a closer look at the time-consuming processes regarding EU approvals of new foods (novel foods). Plant-based solutions are crucial for a sustainable European food sector. Therefore, biosolution companies should have the best possible conditions.

There will still be a need for the existing approval procedures in the EU's current GMO legislation when we talk about more complex NGT and GMO plants, which clearly differ from naturally occurring organisms or classical mutations.

The use of genetic technology in the EU must take place in both a safe and ethically defensible manner, but our European legislation must not create obstacles to innovative solutions for the agricultural and food industries, which can contribute to achieving the goals of the European Green Deal, the farm to fork strategy, and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, while making our companies competitive on the global market.



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Parliament therefore looks forward to the presentation by the Commission of the "EU Biotech and Biomanufacturing Initiative", which was launched by the Commission's President in her State of The Union Speech on 13 September 2023. It is necessary to ensure that we in Europe have the necessary instruments and framework conditions to promote the green transition.

Best regards

Hans Kristian Skibby
Chairman of the Committee on Environment of the Danish Parliament

Niels Flemming Hansen
Chairman of the European Affairs Committee of the Danish Parliament