

CIBE PRESS RELEASE

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European Parliament has listened to science and farmers' needs with landmark adoption of NGTs

In a landmark decision for the future of European agriculture, the European Parliament under the lead of Rapporteur Jessica Polfjärd, today voted in favour of the main content of the Commission's proposal on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs). MEPs have agreed to embrace innovation and unlock the potential of these novel techniques in the EU to create a more sustainable, resilient and sovereign agri-food system.

"This vote shows that the European Parliament has listened to science and to the needs of farmers. It marks a turning point," said CIBE President Marcel Jehaes. *"By adopting this legislation on NGTs, the EP is finally giving farmers, breeders and primary food processors positive signals. MEPs have kept firm despite strong anti-innovation pressure."*

Krzysztof Nykiel, chairman of the CIBE Technical and Reception Control Committee, pointed out that *"Innovative sugar beet breeding has always been a performing tool for our sector. NGTs will allow more such development at a time when challenges are increasing at a rapid pace. NGTs will help bring a wide range of benefits, especially to sugar beet cultivation, including enhanced resistance to pests and diseases, reduced chemical inputs and improved efficiency and competitiveness. These developments are in line with the objectives of our beet/sugar sector for a more sustainable agri-food system."*

By providing a regulatory path for NGTs, this proposal not only supports innovation but also helps ensure European sovereignty. However, we note that the European Parliament has voted for provisions which could lead to additional administrative burdens. And we regret that some issues have once again been polarised, resulting in some non-scientific provisions such as the exclusion of herbicide-tolerant varieties from these techniques. We reiterate that herbicide tolerance does exist in nature and that growing herbicide tolerant sugar beet can help allow significant reduction in the use of inputs.

CIBE now call on Member States to rapidly reach a positive agreement in Council so that the proposal has a chance of being adopted before the end of this mandate, as highlighted by EU Commissioner Stella Kyriakides, and that new solutions will have a chance of being developed in and for Europe in the coming years.

About CIBE

Gathers national and regional associations from 14 European beet-producing countries as well as the United-Kingdom and Switzerland. It represents and defends the living of 130 000 farmers, for a total production of sugar of around 15 million tonnes.

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