

PRESS RELEASE

## POLICYMAKERS SHOULD RESPECT ORGANIC MOVEMENT'S CHOICE NOT TO USE NGTs

BRUSSELS, 30 NOVEMBER 2023 – Speaking at an online press conference this morning, Jan Plagge, President of IFOAM Organics Europe, called on Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and Member States to respect organic farmers and operators' choice to not use novel genomic techniques (NGTs) and maintain the ban on the use of NGTs in organic production as laid out in the Commission's proposal. Bernard Lignon, IFOAM Organics Europe Board member and sector representative for processing and trade, called on policymakers to include full traceability on the use of NGTs in the production chain and the possibility for coexistence measures at national level in the legislative proposal.

Jan Plagge declared: "MEPs should not rule organics against their own choice. [In June, the overwhelming majority of the European organic movement voted to remain GMO-free](#), as reflected in the Commission's proposal. It would be shocking if MEPs decided to delete the ban of NGTs in organic production and impose the use of NGTs to all producers in Europe, organic or not. Exempting certain NGTs from risk assessment and traceability would have important consequences for the food production sector in Europe, much beyond the organic market, and these discussions should not be rushed, neither in the European Parliament nor among the Member States in the Council."

Bernard Lignon declared: "Transparency and traceability of NGTs are essential for breeders and farmers, as well as for processors, retailers, and consumers. We call on MEPs and Member States to include traceability of NGTs all along the production chain, and the possibility for Member States and regions to take coexistence measures to protect conventional and organic operators from pollen flow and contamination."

The Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union expressed its will to reach a general approach in the Council of Ministers on 10-11 December, with preparatory meetings planned next week. The European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development is expected to vote on its opinion the week of 11 December, while negotiations on compromise amendments have started in the Parliament's Environment Committee, with the rapporteur intending to vote in committee on 11 January. A vote in the Parliament's full Plenary is scheduled only one week afterwards, around 15 January.

*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

- **[New]** Briefing paper [Sustainability in organic breeding: Improving the entire system or adjusting some genes?](#)
- 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.