

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002094/24
to the Commission
Daniel Buda (PPE)
(16 October 2024)**

Subject: Genetic modification of plants in the EU

The first variety of genetically-modified drought-resistant wheat has recently been approved for cultivation in the United States of America. The HB4 variety, developed by the Argentinian company Bioceres Crop Solutions, promises to be more resistant to severe climatic conditions such as drought. However, it will take roughly two years to market this variety on a wide scale, during which time the company also hopes to secure marketing authorisations on international markets, and specifically in countries like Mexico, the Philippines and Japan.

1. Given the increasingly severe impact of drought on agricultural production worldwide, including in the European Union, and the need for sustainable solutions in the field of food security, how will the Commission promote the use of genetically-modified varieties so as to provide urgent support to farmers in the face of climate challenges?
2. Is there an alternative plan for the authorisation and introduction of such varieties in the EU, with a view to ensuring long-term food security, in the event that the legislative procedure on new genome techniques goes no further?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(6 January 2025)**

The Commission is aware of the existence of the genetically modified wheat variety developed to better resist drought conditions. So far no application for approval of this genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has been submitted in the EU.

The Commission handles the authorisation of GMOs, after the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) delivers its scientific opinion, under the existing rules on GMOs ⁽¹⁾ and food and feed ⁽²⁾ set out by the European Parliament and the Council, which provide for high standards of protection of human and animal health and the environment.

The Commission proposed a regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques ⁽³⁾, which aims at steering developments towards contribution to food security, resilience and sustainability goals in a wide range of plant species and in support to farmers, while maintaining a high level of protection of health and the environment.

The Commission will continue supporting the European Parliament and the Council in the discussions to deliver on these objectives. In the meantime, plants obtained by new genomic techniques remain subject to the existing rules on genetically modified organisms.

Transgenic plants containing genetic material from a non-crossable species, such as the drought resistant HB4 wheat approved for cultivation in the United States of America, are out of the scope of the Commission's proposal on new genomic techniques.

Such plants remain subject to the existing legislation on GMOs.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/18>

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2003/1829>

⁽³⁾ COM(2023) 411 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52023PC0411>