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E-001687/2025

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(8.7.2025)

The placing on the market and releasing in the environment of genetically modified (GM) animals in the EU is subject to the GM Organisms (GMO) legislation<sup>1</sup>, regardless of where the genetic alteration is carried out. The legislation does not preclude modifications to feature traits of extinct animals. Any GMO (including GM animals) can only be released after authorisation, following a comprehensive risk assessment concluding that there are no risks for health or the environment, and in conformity with any conditions required. This assessment routinely includes, among others, animal welfare and potential implications for animals and nature.

In addition, specifically for protected habitats and species in the EU, the effects of any deliberate release into the environment of GMOs must also be considered in relation to the EU law requirement to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of the protected species and habitats<sup>2</sup>.

In the event of the deliberate release of a GM animal without authorisation, or instances of migration of such animals into their territory, Member States must take the necessary remedial action, and inform its public, the Commission, and other Member States.

The GMO legislation recognises that Member States may take into consideration ethical aspects in this context<sup>3</sup>. It also allows consultation of relevant committees on ethics, such as the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies, on the ethical implications of biotechnology, either on the Commission's own initiative or at the request of the European Parliament, the Council or a Member State.

Based on the above, the Commission considers that the current EU legislation is adequate to handle cases such as the one described by the Honourable Member.

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2001/18/EC - <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2001/18/oj>.

<sup>2</sup> Article 22(b) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7–50.

<sup>3</sup> Recital 9 of Directive 2001/18/EC.