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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi
on behalf of the European Commission
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EU legislation on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) ensures a high level of safety for human and animal health and for the environment and is recognised as one of the most stringent in the world. To be authorised for placing on the market in the EU, a GMO must go through a comprehensive and thorough risk assessment. In addition, each authorised GMO is subject to a mandatory post-market environmental monitoring to identify potential adverse effects.

Member States have the possibility, since 2015, to opt out of the cultivation of GMOs on their territory either during the authorisation process or once the authorisation has been granted. Those restrictions must be justified based on compelling grounds such as environmental or agricultural policy objectives, town and country-planning, land use, coexistence, socio-economic impacts, or public policy.

The European Food Safety Authority and its GMO Panel, composed of independent scientific experts, follow closely scientific developments on the safety of GMOs to perform the risk assessment of GMOs at EU level in line with EU legislation and in accordance with the highest safety standards and the most up-to-date scientific evidence. In addition, the Commission has funded projects related to the risk assessment of GMOs¹. These projects concluded the current risk assessment methodology is adequate for ensuring a high level of safety of human health.

¹ GMO Risk Assessment and Communication of Evidence, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/311957>;
Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) Two Year Safety Testing, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/632165/fr>.