

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001156/26
to the Commission
Tobiasz Bocheński (ECR)
(19 March 2026)**

Subject: Draft regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques (NGT)

In view of the forthcoming second reading of the draft Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, I am writing to the Commission to request clarification on several key issues that are causing serious concern amongst citizens, farmers and the scientific community.

Under the proposal, a significant proportion of NGT plants (Category c) are to be exempted from existing GMO regulations, including requirements for risk assessment for human, animal and environmental health, traceability, monitoring and labelling. At the same time, the draft adopts the criterion of 'equivalence' between NGT plants and conventional plants, which — according to some experts — lacks sufficient scientific justification.

Taking the above into consideration:

1. On which specific published scientific analyses is the assumption of equivalence between NGT plants and conventional plants based?
2. How does the Commission intend to ensure a high level of health and environmental protection in the event that Category C NGT plants are exempted from a full risk assessment?
3. How will market transparency and consumers' right to information be ensured where labelling requirements are reduced?

Submitted: 19.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(11 May 2026)**

The equivalence criteria between plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques (NGT) and conventional plants in the Commission's proposal ⁽¹⁾ are based on a literature study on conventional plants and on extensive work of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and of the Commission Joint Research Centre ⁽²⁾.

In a scientific opinion requested by the Parliament ⁽³⁾, EFSA confirmed that it is scientifically justified to consider NGT plants meeting those criteria (Category c NGT plants) as equivalent to conventional plants as regards genetic modifications and potential risks.

In their provisional agreement, the Parliament and the Council amended the criteria for Category c NGT plants in the Commission's proposal but maintained that proposal's scientific basis, which excludes from Category c modifications unlikely obtainable by conventional breeding.

Scientific evidence ⁽⁴⁾, notably from EFSA, confirms that certain NGT plants do not pose new hazards and are therefore equivalent to conventional plants.

This justifies exempting those plants and their products from specific risk assessment for genetically modified organism (GMO). However, Category c NGT plants remain subject to EU legislation applicable to conventional plants/products including safeguard measures to protect human, animal health and the environment, and will undergo a monitoring programme including on environmental and health impacts.

Category C NGT plants will be identified in a public register and in variety catalogues. In addition, seed must be labelled, enabling supply chains to exclude NGT plants.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2023) 411 final. On 3 December 2025, the European Parliament and the Council provisionally agreed on the proposal.

⁽²⁾ Technical paper on the rationale for the equivalence criteria in Annex I to the proposal for a regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques, https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f54a2386-e158-4dbb-af78-41361e471b7f_en?filename=gmo_biotech_ngt_proposal_tech-paper.pdf.

⁽³⁾ EFSA Panel on Genetically Modified Organisms, 2024. Scientific opinion on the ANSES analysis of Annex I of the EC proposal COM (2023) 411 (EFSA-Q-2024-00178). EFSA Journal, 22(7), e8894, <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2024.8894>.

⁽⁴⁾ The impact assessment accompanying the Commission legislative proposal for a regulation on plants obtained by certain NGTs contains the relevant references to the scientific evidence underpinning the proposal: https://food.ec.europa.eu/document/download/f1142e86-43df-4791-9df2-563e696c59cf_en?filename=gmo_biotech_ngt_ia_report.pdf.

EFSA's scientific opinions relating to NGTs are available here: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/topics/new-genomic-techniques>.

Consumers wishing to avoid NGT products could rely on these chains. Already today, GMOs obtained by random mutagenesis are exempted from the GMO labelling requirements.
