

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001774/26
to the Commission
Kostas Papadakis (NI)
(30 April 2026)**

Subject: Relaxation of the rules on genetically modified organisms to the detriment of hardworking farmers

The Commission's proposal for a regulation on plants obtained by new genomic techniques introduces a distinction between two categories of plant: NGT1 and NGT2.

NGT1 plants are exempt from basic requirements for risk assessment, labelling and traceability of the end product. This means that consumers do not know what they are consuming and there is a risk of crops being accidentally contaminated by other adjacent crops or by the NGT1 reproductive material. The proposed framework allows for the patenting of plants obtained by such techniques, with some exceptions, and provides for mechanisms to regulate access to such genetic material. At the same time, the use of these plants in organic production is still banned. NGT2s are subject to risk assessment and authorisation procedures, in line with the current GMO framework.

The proposal seeks to build a regulatory framework for the development and use of these techniques, arguing that the rules currently in force pose an obstacle to innovation and competitiveness.

Can the Commission answer the following:

1. What view does it take of the fact that by relaxing any restrictions and by not making labelling compulsory for NGT1 plants, the proposed regulatory framework will increase mass imports of such products from non-EU countries, worsening the situation farmers are facing as a result of a policy that promoted competitiveness and profits for agro-industrial groups?
2. What view does it take of the fact that the overall strategy being promoted in the agri-food sector, including the promotion of the EU-Mercosur free trade agreement, further concentrates production in the hands of big corporations, to the detriment of hardworking farmers and livestock farmers?

Submitted: 30.4.2026

**Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(9 July 2026)**

Under the proposed Regulation on plants obtained by new genomic techniques (NGTs), NGT plants equivalent to conventional plants will be subject to the provisions that apply to conventional varieties.

By providing for enabling and proportionate rules, the regulation will allow EU breeders to accelerate the development of crops and EU farmers, in particular small ones, to benefit from plants offering, for example, enhanced resilience to climate change, improved nutrient use requiring fewer fertilisers, pest resistance, or traits beneficial for processors and consumers.

This will help farmers to access new varieties more quickly, opening new markets and reducing dependence on inputs such as synthetic fertilisers. NGTs can also boost domestic production of protein plants, reducing supply chain vulnerabilities and enhancing food security.

Furthermore, imported products from NGT plants must fulfil the same requirements as those produced in the EU. The regulation has thus the potential to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of the EU's agricultural sector.

The EU-Mercosur Interim Trade Agreement (ITA) ⁽¹⁾, which has been provisionally applied by the EU and the Signatory MERCOSUR States as of 1 May 2026, will significantly reduce tariffs on EU agri-food exports to the Mercosur region, while offering safeguards to protect sensitive EU sectors such as beef and poultry.

These new opportunities and safeguards will benefit EU companies of all sizes, including SMEs ⁽²⁾. In addition, the Agreement contains a dedicated chapter for SMEs to address the specific challenges they face in trade and investment activities.

⁽¹⁾ https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mercotur/eu-mercotur-agreement_en.

⁽²⁾ Small and medium-sized enterprises.