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EU approves provisional agreement on new genomic techniques for plant breeding

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Innovative new genomic techniques (NGTs) to enhance agricultural sustainability and competitiveness

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The European Commission welcomes the provisional political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on new EU rules for plants obtained by using **new genomic techniques (NGTs)**. The agreed measures will enableÂ more innovative plant breeding in the EU, helping farmers to grow plants that are more resilient to climate change and making them more sustainable as producers will require less resources, fertilisers and pesticides to fight pests. This will allow breeders and farmersÂ to be more competitive by levelling the international playing fieldÂ with other producers. The new measures will significantly reduce the administrative burden too, whileÂ ensuring high safety standards for NGT plants and products.

New genomic techniques are innovative tools that can boost our agricultural and bioeconomy sectors through enabling faster, more targeted and more precise changes to plant varieties than conventional breeding techniques. More improved plant varieties can be developed, such as those that are climate resilient, pest resistant, or provide higher yields.

Once adopted and fully implemented, the measures agreed today will create two distinct pathways for NGT plants to be placed on the market:

- **NGT plants that could also occur naturally or by conventional breeding (so-called 'category 1 NGT plants')** will be subject to a **verification procedure**, based on set criteria. NGT plants that meet these criteria will be **treated like conventional plants and exempted from the requirements of the genetically modified organisms (GMO) legislation;**
- **For all other NGT plants ('category 2 NGT plants'), the requirements of the current GMO legislation would apply**. They will be subject to a risk assessment and authorisation procedure before they can be put on the market.

They will have to be traceable and labelled as GMOs, with the possibility of a voluntary label to indicate the purpose of the genetic modification.
- The Commission will oversee **transparency and licencing practices related to patents**, and provide guidance where needed. It will also assess the impact of patents on breeders' access to genetic material and on farmers' access to plant varieties, with a view to proposing follow-up measures if necessary.

Next steps

The agreed Regulation must be formally adopted by the Council and the European Parliament. It will be published in the Official Journal in the course of 2026 and will start applying two years later.

The implementation of the Regulation will be supported by a robust **monitoring programme** of economic, environmental and social impacts of NGT products that will focus, inter alia, on aspects of sustainability and safety.