

## **SAFE objects to political agreement on NGTs, calls for EP proposal to be revived**

*Brussels, 4 December*

SAFE opposes the political agreement to exempt certain non-genomic techniques (NGTs) from the legal requirements currently applicable to GMOs, as reached today between the Council and the European Parliament. The agreed compromise foresees lower traceability requirements for so-called category 1 NGTs, which would undermine the integrity of organic food production, harming consumer choice.

If this compromise becomes law, category 1 NGT plants will be sold alongside organic plants, without distinction, and organic producers will be technically unable to avoid NGT presence in their produce. This will not be considered as a breach of organic farming requirements, which will then remove the need for checks on the absence or presence of category 1 NGTs, leaving both producers and consumers in the dark.

SAFE's Deputy Director Luigi Tozzi said: "We believe that all NGTs must be fully traceable and clearly labelled. For us, this must be an indispensable legal requirement. If we give up on this requirement, soon enough NGT crops will contaminate organic crops, and it will be impossible to keep them apart. We want a system in which organic crops have a place and can coexist with NGT crops, without farmers and consumers being misled."

The current compromise proposal leaves the problem with patents open, rendering farmers unprotected against potential lawsuits from the industry when they save and replant seeds. To address that, in the current proposal, the Commission will be mandated to draw up an EU code of conduct on patents.

SAFE calls for a new proposal along the lines of the original text by the European Parliament, which guaranteed the traceability of all NGTs and included safeguards against the possibility of patent conflicts.

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