

SAFE supports Slovakian lawsuit against NGT regulation

SAFE supports the lawsuit by the Slovakian government, announced this morning, against the new EU regulation on New Genomic Techniques (NGTs) adopted in June. The regulation removes key safeguards regarding labelling and traceability for Category 1 NGTs, which in SAFE's view erodes the right to consumer protection and threatens organic food production and certification.

The lawsuit argues that all NGTs are GMOs, as ruled by the European Court of Justice in 2018. This means that NGTs should be bound by the same rules as other GMOs. The current NGT regulation, therefore, contravenes EU law, damaging consumer protection, and information.

SAFE's Deputy Director Luigi Tozzi said: "NGTs are GMOs, even if the European Parliament decided to change their name earlier this year. We are not opposed to NGTs as such, but consumers have the right to know what they are buying. They must be given clear information in the labelling of the products they buy, not in some hidden database. This is a basic premise to preserve their freedom of choice. Months ago, we warned that the new regulation would bring legal uncertainty, and this is now being demonstrated by the Slovakian government's initiative, which we and other organisations across Europe support. This legislation must be entirely abandoned."

SAFE has consistently argued that the elimination of key labelling and traceability requirements for category 1 NGTs would make it impossible for consumers to identify products that contain them and would threaten organic food production.

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Deputy Director Luigi Tozzi added: “We expect the European Court of Justice to proceed with the same clarity in support of consumer rights as it did in its recent Lidl v AGCM ruling in April, when it underlined the principle that a food product can be misleading, even when it technically contains correct information. Consumer choice and consumer information are key rights in the EU, and they must be protected, in court when necessary, against poorly drafted regulations.”