Veille citoyenne d'information sur les OGM et les semences

Consumer associations call for continued labelling and traceability of GMOs

Par Antoine VEPIERRE

Publié le 14/11/2025, modifié le 09/03/2026

On 14 October 2025, eight consumer associations from various EU Member States published an opinion calling on European institutions to maintain GMO labelling to enable European consumers to make informed choices about their food.



As trilogue negotiations on the regulation of GMOs derived from new genetic modification techniques (known as "*new genomic techniques*" or NGTs) continue to progress within the European institutions[1], European consumer associations published a joint opinion piece[2] in *The Brussels Times* calling for the maintenance of GMO labelling and traceability, which the European Commission is proposing to abolish. According to them, this is in the "*the general interest and the right of consumers to know what they eat and their freedom of choice*". Among the signatories are two French organisations: UFC-Que Choisir and POLLINIS.

"*A GMO, whatever its name, remains a GMO*"

After recalling the historical context of the emergence of GMOs in the late 1990s and mentioning the citizen mobilisations that led to their regulation by European legislation, the signatories of the opinion assert that the new legislative proposal, made by the European Commission in July 2023, "*would undermine consumers' right to information*". As we have pointed out several times in our

articles[3], this proposal envisages the removal of risk assessment, labelling and traceability requirements for GMOs obtained through NGTs. To justify this deregulation, the European Commission claims that NGTs do "*the same thing as nature, or as conventional breeding*". However, this argument is widely rejected by the signatory organisations, which claim that "*a GMO, whatever its name, remains a GMO*".

To justify their position, they cite the 25 July 2018 ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) stating that NGTs produce GMOs and must be regulated as such[4]. Furthermore, to support their request to maintain GMO labelling, the signatories cite publications by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), ANSES[5] , the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation[6] and the Austrian Environment Agency[7], which "*have never supported exempting these plants from risk assessment*".

The organisations then raise the issue of patents related to these GM plants derived from NGT, not this time to warn of the threat they pose to small and medium-sized breeders, farmers and the organic and GMO-free sectors, as was the case in a previous opinion piece[8], but to point out that "*agrochemical companies patent these plants and are able to distinguish them from their competitors' products*" and that "*therefore it is possible to differentiate them*". At this point, they urge MEPs not to renege on their 2024 vote in favour of GMO/NGT labelling and, consequently, "*to ensure that labelling and traceability are upheld during the trilogue discussions*".

A call for compliance with general food legislation

The signatories continue their argument by referring to general food legislation, Regulation 178/2002[9], a fundamental text for these consumer protection organisations. In particular, they invoke:

- Article 18, which requires the traceability of foodstuffs throughout the supply chain, and thus consider that "*exempting GMO-NGTs from traceability would violate this law*".
- Article 8, which establishes a "*right to know*" for consumers, in particular through labelling, which should enable them "*to make informed choices about the food they purchase*".

Reference is also made to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, which stipulate the need for a "*high level of protection*" for consumers.

This new opinio therefore shows that, beyond the regulatory texts governing GMOs themselves, the proposal to deregulate GMOs derived from GTN involves other fundamental texts. If this proposal were to be adopted, it is highly likely that civil society organisations would mobilise against the breaches of European consumer and citizen rights that it would entail.

1Eric Meunier, "The European Commission's legal initiatives on the Living", *Inf'OGM*, 7 November 2024.

2 Collective opinion, "Modified food, modified rights? Why genetically modified organisms labelling must stay", *The Brussels Times,* 14 October 2025.
List of signatory organisations: AK, ASUFIN, CECU, Eurocoop, Foodwatch, POLLINIS, UFC-Que Choisir, ZPS.

3 Eric Meunier, "The European Commission's legal initiatives on the Living", *Inf'OGM*, 7 November 2024.

4 Charlotte Krinke, "Europe – Les nouveaux OGM sont des OGM comme les autres" *Inf'OGM*, 25 July 2018.

5 Anses, "Risques et enjeux socio-économiques liés aux plantes NTG", 22 January 2024.

6 Bundesamt für Naturschutz, "For a science-based regulation of plants from new genetic techniques", 2024.

7 Michael Eckerstorfer, Andreas Heissenberger, "NEW GENETIC ENGINEERING – POSSIBLE UNINTENDED EFFECTS", November 2023.

8 Collective, "Joint statement on the deregulation of new GMOs. Protect the business of small and medium size breeders, farmers, and the organic and non GMO sectors in the EU", 11 February 2025.

9 European Commission, "Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety", *Official Journal,* No. L 031, p. 0001–0024, 1st February 2002.

Adresse de cet article : https://infogm.org/en/consumer-associations-call-for-continued-labelling-and-traceability-of-gmos/