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Deregulation of GMOs/NGTs: the ENVI Committee drives the point home

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On 28 January 2026, the European Parliament's Environment Committee confirmed, by a large majority, its support for the deregulation of almost all GMOs obtained through new techniques (GMOs/NGTs). This vote follows the informal approval by Member State representatives of the compromise text resulting from the trilogue on 19 December 2025.



A further step was taken on Wednesday 28 January 2026 in the long legislative process aimed at deregulating almost all plants derived from new genetic modification techniques – GMOs whose name is being obscured by referring to them as NGTs[i]. A trilogue between representatives of the

European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU (the Member States) resulted in a provisional text during the winter of 2025[ii]. This text was approved by the permanent representatives of the EU Member States on 19 December 2025[iii]. The next stage in the legislative process was a confirmatory vote by the Parliament's ENVI Committee. On 28 January, by a large majority (59 votes in favour, 24 against and 2 abstentions)[iv], this committee also approved the compromise text.

What does the compromise text adopted by the ENVI Committee propose?

Before analysing the votes in the ENVI Committee, let us briefly summarise the main points of this compromise text:

- Creation of two categories of GMOs: NGT1 and NGT2. Category 1 plants would be those declared "*equivalent*" to plants that can be obtained conventionally, based on criteria with uncertain scientific foundations. Plants genetically modified to tolerate a herbicide or produce an insecticide could not, as discussions currently stand, be declared NGT1.
- No authorisation procedure for NGT1, but a simple declaration, unverifiable by public authorities.
- Elimination of risk assessment, labelling (except for seed lots) and documentary traceability, and post-market monitoring for so-called NGT1 plants (surely the majority of GMOs).
- End of the obligation to provide an analytical method for identification and quantification of NGT1s.
- No compensation fund for contaminated organic or "*GMO-free*" crops, as, according to recital 23b of the proposal, such crops, if contaminated "*accidentally or technically* unavoidably" (*sic*), will not be downgraded.
- The possibility of patenting the genetic information of GM plants classified as NGT1 remains; a vague "*voluntary*" (or non-binding) code of conduct, which is difficult to enforce, has been proposed alongside other equally non-binding measures.

Who voted for this text in the ENVI Committee?

As a reminder, the distribution of MEPs across committees strictly reflects the political composition of the Parliament in plenary. Given that the largest group is the European People's Party (EPP), it *de facto* has the largest number of MEPs on this committee. However, each group is free to decide which MEPs (full members or substitutes) will sit on the committee. This is not insignificant in the case of GMOs, where national political leanings and dissent within parliamentary groups are pronounced, as we shall see later.

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTENTION
The Left	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	0
Greens	0	5 (100%)	0
S&D	7 (44%)	9 (56%)	0
Renew	8 (89%)	1 (11%)	0
PPE	24 (100%)	0	0
ERC	7 (70%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)
ID / PfE	11 (100%)	0	0
ESN	0	3 (100%)	0

NI	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	0
TOTAL	**59 (69.4%)**	**24 (28.2%)**	**2 (2.4%)**

Table 1. Results (and percentages) of votes by political group in the ENVI Committee

As we have seen, this confirmation vote was therefore passed by a majority of the 90 MEPs sitting on this committee, with 59 votes in favour, 24 against and 2 abstentions.

The few absentees (5 out of 90) were mainly from parties generally opposed to the deregulation proposal: the European Left (1 out of 6), the Greens (2 out of 7), the Socialists (1 out of 17) and the Renew/Renaissance group (1 out of 10).

It is worth noting that the Chair of the ENVI Committee, the Spanish Socialist Antonio Decaro, did not take part in the vote. Nor did Pascal Canfin, shadow rapporteur and French MEP from the Renew group, who nevertheless did not shy away from making a pro-deregulation statement. On LinkedIn[v], he writes: *“Unlike GMOs, which introduce genetic material from other species into a plant, NGTs are carried out solely within the same genetic pool: in other words, they accelerate what nature does, they do not modify it. This is a fundamental distinction that justifies a specific legislative framework*”. He thus echoes the European Commission’s falsehood regarding the definition of a GMO, as well as the seed industry’s false promises: *“These new seeds will enable us to move faster in building drought resistance, adapting to higher temperatures, reducing fertiliser* requirements…”

Unsurprisingly, all the environmentalists present voted against the bill. The *"European United Left*" group (GUE/NGL) followed suit, with 80% voting against. Members of the Socialism & Democracy group were divided, with 7 in favour and 9 against. A far-right group, Europe of Sovereign Nations, voted 100% against the text, stating that this is primarily a matter of opposition to the EU and that they wish to be able to decide sovereignly at national level whether or not to deregulate GMOs/NGTs.

Two groups voted unanimously in favour of the text: the European People’s Party and Patriots for Europe.

In the Parliament, currently, the Renew Group (77), the EPP (188) and Patriots for Europe (84) hold 349 seats, or 48.5%. If we add another far-right group (ECR), which voted unanimously in favour of deregulation within the ENVI Committee, this rises to 59.3% of all MEPs.

If we analyse the votes in the April 2024 plenary session, we can see that votes within the groups are often fairly unanimous, though not entirely uniform. Thus, Renew voted 84% in favour of deregulation, the EPP 76% and the Patriots 92%. MEPs from the GUE and Greens groups, meanwhile, either voted against the text (97% and 82% respectively) or abstained.

If we apply these 2024 proportions to the current MEPs, we would get between 386 and 391 votes in favour (the majority stands at 359). We have not taken into account the votes of ESN MEPs (who were absent during the previous parliamentary term but voted against in the ENVI Committee), nor those of the non-attached MEPs, whose vote is by definition impossible to predict. This is therefore merely a projection, but it nevertheless puts the ENVI Committee’s vote into perspective. Indeed, on 28 January, all EPP MEPs voted in favour of deregulation… Yet, in plenary, the group was not united in 2024. The question therefore remains as to how MEPs will vote during the upcoming plenary session, as, last January, in the case of the motion of censure against the European Commission regarding the Mercosur treaty, the newspaper *Le Point* reported that *"the [EPP] leadership has decided to crack down hard: any EPP MEP voting in favour of the censure would face six months of disciplinary sanctions*"[vi]. Will such a threat be used during the

plenary vote on the text concerning the deregulation of GMOs/NGTs?

	Number of MEPs in 2025	Number of MEPs FOR (based on the 2024 ratio)
The Left	46	0
Greens/EFA	53	0
S&D	136	58
Renew	77	67
PPE	188	143
ERC	78	42
ID / PfE	84	77
ESN	25	
NI	32	4
TOTAL	**719**	**392**

Table 2: Projected percentage of votes in the ENVI Committee (2025) for the European Parliament's plenary session

The ENVI Committee has become more supportive of deregulation

In January 2024, the ENVI Committee had voted on an earlier version of the deregulation text, the initial version proposed by the European Commission in July 2023. A number of amendments were adopted at that time (which were subsequently put to a vote in plenary). However, the spirit of the European Commission's proposal remained in the text voted on that day by the MEPs on the committee. *Inf'OGM* has compared the voting results within this committee (this table does not take into account MEPs who did not take part in the votes).

	FOR		AGAINST		ABSTENTION	
	2024	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**	**2024**	**2025**
The Left	0.0	16.7	100.0	66.7	0.0	0
S&D	25.0	41.2	68.8	71.4	6.3	0
Green	0.0	0.0	100.0	52.9	0.0	0
Renew	75.0	80.0	16.7	10.0	8.3	0
PPE	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
ERC	100.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4
ID	71.4	70.0	0.0	10.0	28.6	0
ESN		0.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	0
NI	0.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	0.0	0
TOTAL	**57.3**	**69.4**	**37.8**	**28.2**	**4.9**	**2.4**

Table 3: Votes by political group in the ENVI Committee in 2024 and 2025 (in %)

It appears that the ENVI Committee was less supportive of the deregulation of GMOs/NGTs in 2024 than in 2025 (57.3% in favour in 2024 compared with 69.4% in 2025). What has changed most is the position of MEPs from the GUE and S&D groups, which shifted from 0% in favour to 16.7% and from 25% in favour to 41.2% respectively. The EPP and the Greens remain consistent in their voting: 100% in favour for the EPP and 100% against for the Greens.

It should be noted that an election took place between the two votes. The number of MEPs appointed to the ENVI committee rose from 78 (in 2024) to 83 (in 2025). As a result of the election, the groups most opposed to deregulation lost six MEPs (GUE and the Greens), whilst the EPP and far-right groups gained a total of 12 MEPs.

Thus, if we analyse both sets of data, it becomes clear that the shift to the right in the European Parliament following the 2024 elections worked in favour of the deregulation of GMOs/NGTs within the ENVI Committee. Will the same be true in plenary?

Nationality has a marginal influence on voting

As for the political groups that voted inconsistently, the nationality of MEPs may partly explain the voting pattern. Thus, the members of the Socialist and Left groups who voted for deregulation are Spanish, Croatian, Lithuanian, Maltese or Swedish. This is not insignificant. These countries have very often, if not always, been very supportive of GMOs. Seventy per cent of the ECR group voted in favour of the text, but the MEPs who voted against or abstained are Greek or Polish, two countries traditionally opposed to GMOs.

An MEP's nationality can sometimes shed light on their vote, particularly for those in the S&D and GUE groups. For parties with a clear stance, such as the EPP, EPP-ED or the Greens, no national influence could be identified.

Following this confirmation vote by the members of the European Parliament's ENVI Committee, the text has been referred back to the Council of the EU, where Member States must still formally adopt it at first reading. This vote could take place in the spring, possibly in April. If the vote is in favour, the compromise text would be sent back to the ENVI committee. The committee would then have to make a voting recommendation to MEPs meeting in plenary, possibly in April or later.

Breakdown of votes by MEPs from the countries most heavily represented on the ENVI Committee

The countries with the most MEPs on the ENVI Committee who voted on this text are: Germany (17), Italy (11), the Czech Republic (7), Sweden (6), France (6) and Spain (6). Together, these six countries account for 62% of the votes cast by the ENVI Committee on this text.

	FOR	AGAINST	TOTAL
Germany	6	9	17
?Italy	9	2	11
Czech Republic	6	1	7
Sweden?	5	1	6
France?	4	2	6
Spain?	6	0	6

i Eric Meunier, "La Commission européenne veut en finir avec les OGM", *Inf'OGM*, 24 July 2023.

ii Council of the EU, "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending

Regulation (EU) 2017/625 – Analysis of the final compromise text with a view to agreement", 11 December 2025.

iii Eric Meunier, 'Qualified majority in the Council of the European Union to deregulate numerous GMOs', *Inf'OGM*, 19 December 2025.

ivEuropean Parliament, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, "Result of roll-call votes – 28 January 2026", 28 January 2026.

vPascal Canfin, "Agreement on new genomic techniques: solutions for agricultural transition and climate change resilience", 4 December 2025.

viEmmanuel Berretta, "Motion of no confidence against Ursula von der Leyen: François-Xavier Bellamy faces sanctions", *Le Point*, 21 January 2026.

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