

**The decision of the Conseil d'Etat (France) on the GMO Directive**

**A DECISION THAT ANTICIPATES THE DECLINE  
OF OUR AGRICULTURE AND OUR SEED INDUSTRY**

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In line with the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) the Conseil d'Etat (France) recognizes that certain mutagenesis techniques can be excluded from the application of GMO regulations. It ordered that these techniques be identified following consultation with the High Council for Biotechnology (HCB). For the French Association of Plant Biotechnologies (AFBV), this list of techniques should be established at the EU level with EFSA and the relevant competent authorities of the member states.

The AFBV warns that a reduced list of excluded techniques would effectively prohibit research/development from using technical advances resulting from scientific progress. **Blocked in its potential for innovation, the seed sector would be threatened with serious competitive decline in the world market at the expense of our agricultural production.** On the contrary, the French seed sector should be encouraged to innovate by stimulating its research since this industrial activity which brings together some 72 companies in France is one of the rare sectors of activity where France is in the position of world leader: 1st exporter and 3rd producer in the world.

**For the AFBV, the decisions of the CJEU and the Conseil d'Etat confirm that the current GMO regulations have become obsolete.** Based on the knowledge and technical progress in the 1990's, they do not take into account either the current state of science and precision biotechnology which includes genome editing, nor the development of GMOs in the World for 24 years (191 million hectares in 2018). **A quick updating of Directive 2001/18/EC is essential so that our agriculture can benefit from the innovations necessary** for its sustainable development while it is subject to the challenges of climate change and the necessary reduction in the use of phytosanitary products.

**This is why the AFBV jointly with the German association WGG have transmitted to the European Commission concrete proposals for updating the European Directive which governs GMOs to allow rapid use of genome editing. The future of sustainable development of our agriculture and the strategy for transitioning to environmental friendly practices are at stake.**

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