



Parigi, Zwijnaarde, Karlsruhe, 19 Gennaio 2024

Lettera aperta

al Presidente del Parlamento europeo, Roberta Metsola
e ai membri del Parlamento europeo

Le nuove tecniche genomiche (NGT) sono fondamentali per raggiungere una maggiore sostenibilità dell'agricoltura e della sovranità alimentare in Europa.

A livello europeo sono stati fissati obiettivi ambiziosi per garantire la sovranità alimentare mantenendo la sostenibilità dell'agricoltura, che deve far fronte ai cambiamenti climatici riducendo al contempo l'uso di fattori produttivi come acqua, fertilizzanti e prodotti fitosanitari.

Per raggiungere questi obiettivi, è necessario un flusso continuo di innovazione. A tal fine è necessario accelerare lo sviluppo di nuove varietà vegetali adatte ai vincoli ambientali sopra descritti. Ciò presuppone che queste nuove varietà siano in grado di resistere a stress ambientali come la siccità o le temperature estreme (stress abiotici) e di essere resistenti a malattie e parassiti (stress biotici). La rapida introduzione di queste varietà sarà possibile solo se i genetisti sementieri avranno accesso a tutte le tecniche disponibili senza preconcetti e nelle giuste condizioni. Tuttavia, questo non è attualmente il caso in Europa, poiché la legislazione sugli OGM applicabile alle NGT, che risale al 2001, non è adattata a queste recenti tecnologie.

Molti risultati sono già stati pubblicati e le prime varietà NGT sono già disponibili.

Il potenziale delle NGT è già dimostrato dal numero di pubblicazioni scientifiche in tutto il mondo. Più di 800 sono attualmente elencate nella banca dati EU-SAGE [1] e coprono la gamma di caratteristiche descritte sopra, applicate a 70 specie vegetali diverse. La legislazione sugli OGM, che però è stata adattata in diversi Paesi del mondo, ha autorizzato la commercializzazione delle prime varietà NGT, come un pomodoro arricchito di GABA (un regolatore della pressione sanguigna) in Giappone, un cavolo-rapa negli Stati Uniti o una banana a imbrunimento ridotto nelle Filippine. Altre ne arriveranno se si considera, ad esempio, il numero di piante NGT elencate nei database dell'USDA [2] statunitense o di Health Canada [3].

La proposta di regolamento della Commissione

Consapevole di questa situazione, la Commissione europea ha presentato nel luglio 2023 una proposta di regolamentazione delle varietà incrociate con le NGT (mutagenesi mirata e cisgenesi). Questa proposta era molto attesa da tutti gli attori coinvolti nella ricerca e nello sviluppo di queste nuove varietà in Europa. Essa prevede che le piante incrociate con le NGT, che potrebbero anche essere presenti in natura o prodotte con tecniche di riproduzione convenzionali, non siano soggette alla legislazione dell'UE sugli OGM. Saranno invece soggette alle norme applicate alle varietà coltivate in modo convenzionale. Queste piante NGT dovranno soddisfare determinati criteri basati sulla sequenza genomica modificata. Verranno verificate da un'autorità competente, elencate in un database pubblico e i sacchi dei semi saranno etichettati come "piante NGT-1". Le altre piante NGT rimarrebbero soggette

alle norme e ai requisiti della legislazione UE sugli OGM, con una valutazione del rischio adattata per tenere conto della diversità dei loro profili di rischio e affrontare le analisi sulla loro identificazione.

Necessità di una rapida adozione del regolamento proposto

Rifiutare l'applicazione degli NGT alle piante impedirebbe all'Europa di partecipare efficacemente, insieme ad altri Paesi, alle sfide che l'agricoltura deve affrontare a livello mondiale. L'Europa deve avere l'ambizione di rimanere un attore importante nella produzione alimentare, nel proprio interesse e nell'interesse del pianeta. Riteniamo che la proposta di regolamentazione delle piante NGT presentata dalla Commissione risponda alle esigenze delle parti interessate coinvolte nelle catene di produzione alimentare. L'adozione di questa proposta, fatte salve alcune precisazioni, molte delle quali sono già state prese in considerazione dal progetto di emendamento della commissione ENVI del Parlamento europeo, e altre che potranno essere inserite in un secondo momento negli atti di esecuzione previsti dal progetto, deve essere attuata molto rapidamente per consentire lo sviluppo delle prime varietà NGT entro la fine del decennio, aiutando così l'Europa a raggiungere gli obiettivi che si è prefissata.

I firmatari sono a disposizione per fornire ulteriori informazioni e rispondere a qualsiasi domanda.



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[1] <https://www.eu-sage.eu/genome-search>

[2] <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/biotechnology/regulatory-processes/confirmations/responses/cr-table>

[3] <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/genetically-modified-foods-other-novel-foods/transparency-initiative/list-non-novel-products-plant-breeding-food-use.html>

Allegato: Elenco dei cofirmatari

Attachment to the open letter: “New genomic techniques (NGTs) are key to achieving greater sustainability of agriculture and food sovereignty in Europe”.

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