

OPINION

**of the EU Committee of the Austrian Federal Council
pursuant to Article 23e of the Federal Constitutional Law (B-VG)
07 November 2023**

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

The Federal Government, in particular the responsible Federal Minister for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, as well as the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management and the Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, are requested to continue to actively advocate the retention of the following fundamental principles in the ongoing negotiations at European level on the Regulation on New Genetic Engineering proposed by the European Commission:

- The possibility of banning the cultivation of all plants produced using genetic engineering, including new genomic techniques, in individual member states on the basis of national decisions ("opt-out regulation")
- Labelling of all organisms derived from genetic engineering, including new genomic techniques, and the food, feed and seed derived from them
- Authorisation procedure for all organisms derived from genetic engineering, including new genomic techniques, which also includes a risk assessment, particularly with regard to potential risks to human health and environmental hazards
- Compliance with the precautionary principle when working with, releasing and authorising organisms produced using genetic engineering, including new genomic techniques

Furthermore, the Federal Government is requested to continue to work actively to ensure that any distinctions between NGT1 and NGT2, as provided for in the draft, can only be amended by means of an ordinary legislative procedure and not by means of an implementing or delegated act.

The Federal Government, in particular the Federal Minister for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, and the Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, are requested to vote against the European Commission's proposal, which would mean a departure from the above-mentioned, proven rules for the authorisation and release of genetically engineered organisms, unless the above-mentioned principles are taken into account. Any Austrian representatives in the relevant EU bodies should be instructed accordingly.