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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
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Subject:	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 - Information from the Presidency on the state of play

Delegations will find in annex an information note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject to be dealt with under “Any Other Business” at the session of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 20 November 2023.

Introduction

On 5 July 2023, the Commission submitted a 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 (hereafter ‘the NGT proposal’).

The content of the NGT proposal has been summarised in an earlier Presidency background note¹.

The European Parliament has designated the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety as lead committee, and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development as associated committee. It appointed Jessica Polfjård (EPP-SE, COMENVI) and Veronika Vrecionová (ECR-CZ, COMAGRI) as rapporteurs. The Parliament’s current planning is to have the report containing its position on the NGT proposal adopted by the January I Plenary.

Examination of the NGT proposal in the Council

The NGT proposal was presented to delegations at the Working Party on Innovation in Agriculture (hereafter ‘the Working Party’) on 10 July. Ministers exchanged views on it at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 25 July. The Working Party examined the NGT proposal in its meetings of 26-27 July, 11-12 September, 25-26 September, 5-6 October, 30-31 October and 14 November.

¹ 11725/23

Delegations overall welcomed the proposal and highlighted the potential contribution of NGT to the sustainability objectives of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, as well as EU food self-sufficiency and equitable sharing of benefits. They considered NGT as an important tool for agriculture and expected that NGT would deliver new varieties in a shorter time and at lower cost. Delegations in general favoured the proposal's approach of two categories of NGTs. Nonetheless, some Delegations expressed concerns regarding the co-existence of NGT plants with organic production and the absence of a provision allowing Member States to ban cultivation on their territory (or “opt-out”), while other Delegations referred to the potential benefits of these technologies for organic farmers. The regulatory approach for category 1 NGTs has been also discussed regarding the need to provide proportionate requirements to encourage the participation of small- and medium-sized enterprises and national research centers, while ensuring safety and consumers’ choice.

The Spanish Presidency attempted to address Member States’ major concerns in compromise texts², which it presented to the Working Party on 5-6 October, 30-31 October and 14 November, and invited Member States to react in written form.

Conclusion

The Spanish Presidency continues to work towards reaching a General Approach within its term.

The Council is invited to take note of this information.

² 13725/23, 14695/23, 15205/1/23 REV 1