

Nordic-Baltic GMO-meeting 2019: We cannot detect it – what’s the way forward? – The European Court of Justice’s decision on mutagenesis and its implications for GMO control, 30 September - 2 October 2019, Roskilde, Denmark

Contact

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Financing

60.000 DKK., Nordic Council of Ministers

Facts➤ The GMO-meeting took place in Roskilde, Denmark from 30 September - 2 October 2019.

- 25 participants from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and an invited speaker from the Netherlands.
- Conference language: English.
- Organized by the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration and the Danish Agricultural Agency



Aim of the project

The need to organize the seminar had arisen due to a decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 25 July 2018 (Case C-528/16), that new variants of plants produced by new mutagenesis techniques are to be considered as GMOs and are therefore subject to EU rules on marketing authorization, traceability and labelling of genetically modified seed, food and feed. Thus, presence of seed, food and feed from these plants should be controlled, which is difficult due to a lack of analytical methods. Since the Court's ruling, discussions at EU level have not resulted in solutions to the problem.

The seminar aimed to discuss the situation with experts from the Nordic and Baltic countries and to achieve a common understanding and approach to the control of this new type of GMO's. An invited speaker from the Dutch Ministry of Environment took part in the meeting.

Results of the project

The participants exchanged status of national GMO control efforts regarding GMO's made with traditional and new mutagenesis techniques and exchanged views and discussed the challenges for control of the new type of GMO's. An excursion was made to the University of Aarhus, Flakkebjerg and to Novozymes, Lyngby to hear the views of researchers and industry on the potential uses of new mutagenesis techniques for producing new variants of plants and microorganisms. As a result of the meeting a common understanding was reached among the participants and an overview was developed summarising the status of GMO control in each country.

Benefits from the meeting

A common understanding about the challenges of controlling new mutagenesis techniques is important for the Nordic and Baltic authorities in relation to planning and conducting control of GMO. The meeting made it possible for representatives from competent authorities to have an open discussion on the challenges posed by the Courts decision. The Nordic and Baltic countries have not yet developed national positions on this issue, so the views expressed at the meeting were not necessarily reflecting national policies. The views of the participants were expressed in a common message from the meeting. The participants shared their concerns regarding the lack of possibilities for implementing and enforcing the legislation and controlling products developed by new mutagenesis techniques following the ECJ ruling. The concerns also questioned the adequacy of the current legislative framework and identified a need to resolve urgent concerns and on a longer term, a need for a more comprehensive review and/or revision of current legislation, including considering a more product-based approach. The participants therefore welcomed the initiative from the Finnish EU presidency to address these concerns and challenges to the EU Council and stressed the importance of Member States' involvement in the activities taken up by the EU Commission. Finally, the participants stressed the importance of raising awareness of these concerns and challenges at the appropriate policy levels - nationally and at EU level.

The message showed a high degree of awareness among participants that there is a need for political decisions in the area. This is very important information to the responsible politicians in each country.

The program is included below.

We cannot detect it – what’s the way forward? – The European Court of Justice decision on mutagenesis and its implications for GMO control

30 September - 2 October 2019

Café & Brasserie Florentz, Algade 13, Roskilde, Denmark (next to hotel Zleep)

Meeting program

Monday September 30th

- 12.00-13.00** Welcome and lunch
- 13.00-15.00** **Opening of the meeting - status and current control situation following the ECJ-ruling on new mutagenesis techniques**
Tour de table – presentation of delegates
Presentations (10-15 min) from each Nordic/Baltic country about general status and current control situation (both conventional GMO and new techniques) for food, feed, seed and plants (experimental releases)
- 15.00-15.30** Coffee break
- 15.30-17.30** **Presentations and discussion: Is the current GMO legislation in the EU adequate in view of recent scientific and technical developments?**
Introduction to new mutagenesis techniques – legal and practical implications of the ruling of the EU Court of Justice and the ENGL report (Lars Landbo, Danish Agricultural Agency, 20 min.)
Dutch views on the control situation and the possible way forward in the EU regarding regulation of the new mutagenesis techniques (Jan-Karel Kwisthout, Directorate for Environmental Safety and Risks, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands, 30 min.)
Presentation/reflection from each participating country on the ways forward with respect to control and future regulation.
Discussion in plenary
- 19.00-21.30** **Welcome dinner** (at Cafe & Brasserie Florentz)

Tuesday October 1th – excursion day

- 10.00-11.00** Guided tour to [Roskilde Cathedral](#)
- 11.00-12.00** Transport by bus from Roskilde Cathedral to University of Aarhus, Flakkebjerg.
- 12.00-13.30** Lunch and visit to University of Aarhus, Flakkebjerg. Presentation of on-going research on CRISPR used in cereals, carrots and campanula.
- 13.30-15.00** Transport by bus from Flakkebjerg to Novozymes
- 15.00-17.00** Visit to Novozymes Innovation Campus, Lyngby.
Novozymes is a global biotechnological company focusing on industrial enzymes, microorganisms and biopharmaceutical ingredients – including for the agricultural sector.
- 19.00-21.00** **Dinner** ([Restaurant Snekken, Roskilde](#))

Wednesday October 2nd

- 9.00-10.30** **Summary and conclusions about possible ways forward regarding new mutagenesis techniques in light of the discussions at the meeting**
Summary and discussion
- 10.30-11.00** Coffee break
- 11.00-12.00** Final remarks and conclusions
- 12.00-13.00** **Lunch and good-bye**