

Press Release

New genomic techniques (NGTs) in plant breeding – What will be their role in the transition to more sustainable agri-food systems?

7th December 2022 – On 16th November, Plants for the Future ETP co-hosted in Brussels an event on the topic of NGTs with its Czech national platform (CTP P4F) and with the support of MEP Michaela Šojdrová and MEP Marlene Mortler from the EPP group.

The event was organised in the context of the Czech presidency to the EU Council, with the aim to provide an open platform for discussions between stakeholders and policymakers with diverse opinions on plant breeding and NGTs, enabling the sharing of views and perspectives on the overarching needs and common goals for the transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems.

The morning session brought researchers and agri-food stakeholders together for roundtable discussions on three topics: The path to more sustainable agri-food systems; The potential of plant breeding and NGTs; and Consumer expectations. The afternoon session included the morning participants, policymakers and additional stakeholders. Following several remarks and presentations, a summary of the morning discussions was provided, followed by a panel and open floor discussion.

“It was a great pleasure to co-host and be part of this very interesting and much needed conference. It was an extremely interesting exchange of views of various stakeholders. New genomic techniques can help significantly in achieving sustainable agricultural production. It would be a great mistake not to hear the voice of scientists and farmers calling for the use of new breeding methods. We must therefore lead a transparent and evidence-based discussion among all stakeholders (including organic farmers) and policy makers and communicate with European citizens, the consumers. This conference served this purpose and was an important step in this regard.” Michaela Šojdrová, Czech Member of the European Parliament (KDU-ČSL, EPP), substitute member of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

“The right place to present and discuss your own opinions on NGTs. After more than 15 years of debate, the path to the use of NGT in the EU is more apparent. And that's the direction we need.” Jaroslava Ovesná, Associate Professor and Head of Department at the Crop Research Institute, Prague, Czech Republic, and representative of the Czech National Technology Platform CTP P4F.

“This is, to my knowledge, the first event bringing both sides of the debate on NGTs together for an open discussion. The emphasis was not to come to an agreement or try to change participant's positions, but rather to listen to each other and consider different perspectives. This was a good first step and we hope to have more such discussions in the coming year.” Amrit Nanda, Executive Manager of Plants for the Future ETP, Brussels, Belgium.

See [here](#) for more details and the [summary report](#) of the event.