

## Press Release

### **Breeding innovation for organics - How New Genomic Techniques could benefit the organic sector**

28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 – Plants for the Future ETP co-hosted in Brussels a lunch seminar to discuss the potential of New Genomics Techniques (NGTs) and how they could benefit the organic sector. The lunch seminar was organised in honour of the Swedish Presidency to the EU Council and co-hosted by Swedish MEP Jessica Polfjärd from the European People's Party (EPP).

**The aim of the event was to acknowledge the diversity of views and opinions of different actors within the organic sector, on whether or not NGTs should be used to benefit their sector.**

Opening remarks were provided by MEP Jessica Polfjärd, providing the policy perspective and highlighting current and future challenges and needs, followed by a presentation by Bram Weijland, Organic Affairs Coordinator at Bejo, providing examples of how organic and conventional breeding are interconnected and complement each other, and Kasper Mejnertsen, an organic farmer from Denmark, demonstrating how access to innovation and the best quality varieties are essential to support organic farmers. Following a Q&A and an open floor discussion on the topic, the closing remarks were given by Amrit Nanda, the Executive Manager of Plants for the Future ETP, highlighting the need to move away from views that artificially separate conventional and organic production systems, but rather focus on synergies and how the best of both worlds could be leveraged for the benefit of all.

A legislative proposal for plant produced by certain NGTs is expected from the EU Commission in June 2023. Plants for the Future ETP hopes that this legislation will suggest conventional-like NGT plants to be regulated as conventionally-bred plants, thereby not only enabling their use for conventional breeding and production, but also benefiting the organic sector.

*"New breeding techniques have the potential to contribute to make our agriculture and food production more sustainable and competitive at the same time by making crops more resilient and by that get bigger harvest. For us as policy makers is it important that we make sure to have rules that enable a safe and responsible use of new breeding techniques where it is possible and desired."* Swedish MEP Jessica Polfjärd from the European People's Party (EPP)

*"If use of NGTs would be approved and regulated like conventional breeding methods, Bejo would consider to use these in its organic breeding programmes making the benefits of new resistances in vegetable varieties available to organic farmers, while at the same time providing that information to its farmers to enable freedom of choice."* Bram Weijland, Organic Affairs Coordinator at Bejo

*"If we do it right, the future is bright."* Kasper Mejnertsen, organic farmer in Denmark, Mejnert

For more information, see our website's [events page](#).