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Press Release

Copa and Cogeca's reaction to the ECJ ruling on mutagenesis techniques

In today's judgment on Case C-528/16, the European Court of Justice has taken the view that Member States are free to subject organisms obtained by certain mutagenesis techniques to the GMO Directive and other obligations under the free movement of goods.

Copa and Cogeca regret this interpretation, although it doesn't come as a big surprise. "This decision risks that European agriculture remains isolated from the benefits of innovative developments vis-à-vis the rest of the world" underlined Pekka Pesonen, Secretary General of Copa and Cogeca.

Copa and Cogeca calls upon governments of the Member States to quickly take a decision on the legal status of the certain mutagenesis techniques. "It is up to Member States to find solutions together with stakeholders and NGOs ensuring that the various interests can coexist" said Thor Kofoed, chairman of Copa and Cogeca Working Party on Seeds.

Plant breeders should be able to consider certain mutagenesis techniques in their breeding programs reducing by some 10 years the time to market.

European farmers are currently facing many challenges like extreme weather conditions, price volatility, bans on neonicotinoides etc., therefore they need the availability of improved breeds.

"EU legislation should be fit for purpose, encouraging innovation in plant breeding and helping farmers to continue to provide safe and traceable food whilst protecting resources" concluded Pesonen.

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