

Italian politician calls on EU to embrace new plant breeding techniques to cut farming's environmental impact

The new plant breeding techniques (NPBTs) are a major opportunity to move toward sustainable agriculture and simultaneously ensure food quality for EU consumers, MEP Paolo De Castro told EURACTIV.com.

According to De Castro (S&D), the EU should embrace innovation more and more in order to boost food production and cut the environmental impact of farming.

“In this sense, plant breeding innovation holds enormous promise for helping protect crops against drought and diseases while increasing nutritional values or eliminating allergens.”

NPBTs concern a number of scientific methods for the genetic engineering of plants to enhance traits like drought tolerance and pest resistance.

Critics say they should fall under the GM legislation while supporters say the methods do not transfer any gene from one plant to another but rather accelerate modifications that could happen in nature and therefore, should not be regulated as GMOs.

A European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling is expected soon on “mutagenesis” method. In theory, the court’s ruling will provide more clarity about the EU policy framework for these techniques.

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De Castro said he expected the court decision to encourage innovative and sustainable plant breeding, also in consideration of a similar US decision on the issue.

Read full, original post: [MEP De Castro: New plant breeding techniques will ensure food quality and quantity](#)