

## Top EU farm officials back gene editing, call for efforts to assuage concern about 'unintended impacts'

The European Commission's top agriculture civil servant said [October 1] he supports controversial gene-editing technologies, but called for more "assurances" from developers to assuage public concerns about potential risks.

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The EU's top court ruled in 2018 that genomic editing should be regulated like GMOs, but an ongoing Commission review of the issue is expected to report back next April.

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"We are — in [DG] Agriculture, certainly — very favorable to take up these innovative techniques, but if you want to have a regulatory framework or [for] politicians to go in this direction, you need to have these kinds of assurances," Wolfgang Bartscher, the head of DG Agriculture, told a webinar on genome editing.

Bartscher said that addressing possible biodiversity risks and unintended impacts of gene-edited plants would be "very important to convince people" of the technology's merit.

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