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Major conclusions of the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC) report, *Planting The Future*

- *“Misuse of the precautionary principle has led to restrictive legislation and both a political and market mistrust of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)”*
- *“Current legislation has slowed progress in the EU...This impediment must be addressed”*
- *“This will not be possible without concomitant efforts to improve public awareness...The goal is to move from a situation where the passive consumer merely tolerates technologies to one where the active citizen appreciates and embraces technologies for the benefits they provide”*
- *“The specific physiological changes to plant function introduced by genetic modification are easier to characterise and assess than the less specific changes produced in other ways”*
- *“When used appropriately and properly integrated within well-managed agronomic systems, GM crops can be economically, environmentally and socially beneficial”*
- *“There is no validated evidence that GM has greater adverse impact on health and the environment than any other technology used in plant breeding”*

ANH-Intl Comment: It is impossible, using existing data, to understand the ramifications of multi-generational gene expression following consumption of GM food. For one thing, insufficient numbers of people have been exposed to GM foods for an insufficient period of time to make any conclusions. Furthermore, the implications of the technology are likely to vary according to the amount of GM, as compared with non-GM, food that is consumed. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, where GM maize could form the bulk of an individual’s diet, the health implications are likely to be very different than for Western populations that may be less dependent on GM staples

- *“The current expensive GM regulatory situation in the EU encourages monopolies...The EU regulatory framework should be reformulated to facilitate technology development, support commercial competition and generate diversity in innovation”*

“Promoting natural and sustainable healthcare through the use of good science and good law”

- *“All risk assessment must be evidence-based and should focus on the product not the technology. In the interim, a move to a trait-based regulatory system would facilitate simpler regulation for crop traits closely related to those already approved”*

ANH-Intl Comment: In fact, risk assessment of one given genetic modification cannot be applied to another form of genetic modification, because of the profound and unpredictable consequences on genetic expression

- *“There must be an improved commitment [by the European Commission] to assessing benefits rather than focusing mainly on potential risk and uncertainty”*

ANH-Intl Comment: This is a particularly ironic recommendation, given that the Commission has so far insisted on assessing [only the risks](#) of nutrients in its deliberations over maximum permitted levels of vitamins and minerals in food supplements

- *“One major priority for the research agenda is to model and anticipate the genetic adaptations that will be necessary for continued EU crop productivity as the climate changes...work to engineer such ‘prototype’ plants needs to start now”.*

We addressed many of these points in our [previous articles](#) in [this series](#).