

Media Release

New breeding methods: Switzerland must not be left behind!

Zurich, 17 June 2026. **Today's decision by the European Parliament provides a framework conducive to innovation for the development of precision-bred plants in the EU. The decision paves the way for the cultivation of precision-bred plants, leading to more competitive and sustainable agriculture. For scienceindustries, this makes it all the clearer that Switzerland must revise its significantly more restrictive regulations on new breeding methods.**

New breeding methods, such as genome editing using CRISPR/Cas9, enable the development of plants that are more resistant to diseases, pests and climate stress. They can contribute to more sustainable and productive agriculture. Plants developed in this way, which do not contain foreign genetic material – something that can also occur in conventional breeding – are being regulated in a similar way to conventional varieties in an increasing number of countries. Ultimately, there is no fundamental difference between them. In England, a corresponding law was already passed in 2023. In the same year, the European Commission also presented an innovation-friendly regulatory proposal. This has now been adopted.

Following the adoption of EU rules on new breeding methods: Urgent need for action in Switzerland

Whilst the EU and other countries are modernising their regulations, Switzerland – with what are currently the most restrictive regulations in Europe – risks falling behind. The draft bill for a new Breeding Technologies Act (NZTG) proposed by the Federal Council contains requirements that would make the practical application of these technologies considerably more difficult. In effect, this would make it impossible in Switzerland to use new breeding methods or to cultivate and import plants produced using them. Consequently, even with the proposed NZTG, Switzerland would remain at the bottom of the global rankings with one of the least innovation-friendly regulatory frameworks.

The consultation process has shown that a broad majority of participants are calling for greater alignment with European regulations. "Following today's decision, the Federal Council must act swiftly to amend the bill and present a practical proposal. Switzerland must not allow itself to be sidelined when it comes to a key technology for sustainable agriculture. If we want to strengthen research, innovation and competitiveness, we need a legal framework that keeps pace with developments in Europe", demands Stephan Mumenthaler, Director of scienceindustries.

Further information:

Stephan Mumenthaler, Director
Tel. 079 593 91 63, stephan.mumenthaler@scienceindustries.ch

Jan Lucht, Biotechnology Specialist
Tel. 044 368 17 63, jan.lucht@scienceindustries.ch

About scienceindustries:

scienceindustries, the Swiss Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences Industry Association, advocates for internationally outstanding framework conditions for its approximately 250 member companies. The chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries employ around 80,000 people in Switzerland. As Switzerland's largest export industry, it makes a significant contribution to Swiss prosperity.