



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Director-General

Brussels,  
SANTE.E.3/IC/gk (2020)2364419

Dear Ms Hofmann,

**Subject: Technical Report on Gene Drive Organisms - Implications for the Environment and Nature Conservation**

Thank you for the letter dated 16 March 2020, which you have sent to Director General for Environment Mr Daniel Calleja Crespo, and for the joint technical report of several environmental agencies on gene drive engineered organisms and their potential applications. Mr Calleja Crespo has asked me to reply, since the topic falls under the responsibilities of my Directorate-General.

I have read with interest this technical report: while recognising that gene drive applications might have the potential to address environmental or human health issues, it highlights the environmental risks of gene drive engineered organisms, the critical uncertainties and the knowledge gaps related to the use of the technology and to the methodologies for environmental risk assessment.

In your letter, you emphasise that the currently available environmental risk assessment and monitoring methods for GMOs need to be adapted to the specificities of gene drive organisms and appropriate risk management measures need to be developed before these organisms are released into the environment.

You are aware that to this end the European Commission has mandated the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), already in 2018, to identify potential risks on humans and animals health and on the environment that gene drive modified organisms could pose, and then importantly to determine whether existing guidelines for risk assessment are adequate. The output of this work, in the form of an EFSA Scientific Opinion, is expected before the end of this year.

In your letter, you asked that the recommendations provided in your technical report be taken into account in the context of the mandate to EFSA. I would like to reassure you that we have sent your report to EFSA for the appropriate evaluation.

Ms Christine Hofmann  
Director  
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Furthermore, EFSA's GMO Panel has carried out an open consultation, between 17 February and 17 April 2020, on its draft scientific opinion on gene drive modified organisms. I am sure that you and other environmental agencies had the opportunity to contribute to this public consultation and provide an expert view on this important topic.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Bucher