

New Eurobarometer shows more public confidence in biotechnology – but demand for information still high

The European Commission’s latest Eurobarometer on “public perceptions of life sciences and biotechnology” was released on 11. November and indicates that confidence of Europeans in the technology and its contribution to important policy goals is growing.

In releasing the results, Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn underlined that biotechnology can make an enormous contribution to Europe’s 2020 goals of sustainable growth, improved health and quality of life and will remain a key research area under the EU’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The new survey shows that more than four out of five European citizens are either in favour of biotech or are at least unopposed to it. While results vary across countries (with Baltic and Nordic countries generally more positive than Southern European member States), it also is evident that the support is particularly strong for medical applications. But also crop-based non-food uses such as e.g. biofuels enjoy considerable support. “This surely is an important starting point for a better appreciation of the role biotechnology may play for a more sustainable, a “greener” agricultural production in Europe.” Garlich von Essen, Secretary General of ESA European Seed Association comments on this aspect.

He also explains the need for strong and continuous communication towards the public on agricultural biotechnology. “Here in Europe, information and communication are much more important than in other parts of the world where the technology and its products can speak for themselves. Due to the politically blocked approval process in the EU, we only have very few agricultural biotech products on the market compared to the rest of the world. So people can’t see in practice what benefits the new technologies can bring to farmers and to the environment, to the whole agri-food chain as well as to society at large.”

The Eurobarometer findings also highlight that Europeans are still hungry for facts and communication about the technology and von Essen is certain that this will have continued positive effects on public acceptance: “As Europeans increasingly understand the technologies and their products, they also appreciate the benefits that biotechnologies can bring in terms of health, clean processes and green products, including energies – but also for food security, food safety and food quality.”

For the full Eurobarometer report as well as the related analysis, please click

[esa_10.1057](#) (Eurobarometer - full report)

[esa_10.1058](#) (Wind of change? Analysis of new Eurobarometer on biotech)