
Seminar Announcement

Speaker

Prof. Dr. Detlef Bartsch
Head of Department 4: Genetic Engineering;
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and Food Safety

Seminar Title

**“Regulatory aspects of genome editing – where
precaution and innovation should meet”**

Location

Fraunhofer IME, Forckenbeckstraße 6
Room A003

Date and Time

Wednesday, September 05th 2018 at 09.00 am

Guests are welcome

gez. Prof. Dr. Stefan Schillberg

Abstract

The EU Court of Justice decided on 15 July 2018 that all genome edited organisms—also those who are not distinguishable from those derived from classical breeding technologies or natural recombination processes—are classified as GMO. The European GMO legislation is continuously applied in a way that only multinational companies can afford the high costs necessary to deliver comprehensive data packages for the authorization process. Today an application for a single GMO requires regulatory costs worth of several million Euros without guarantee that such organisms could be used in agriculture, since socio-economics and other political demands can be used by EU member states to ban cultivation. However, an overly broad interpretation of the precautionary principle should not turn into a universal incantation to block innovation. Past experiences with GMO demonstrated that authorized GMO for food and feed use are safe for both human/animal health and the environment since no technique-specific risk has been identified within the comparative approach. Hitting the brakes for a complete ban of genome editing calling upon the precautionary principle is not a realistic option, and we need a concerted action on how modern biotechnologies should be applied in both a cautious and innovative way. It is definitely not only a technological but also a social and ethical debate. Taking no action by avoiding any change or undifferentiated application of strong law interpretation might very likely increase the risk of food insecurity and socio-economic disasters. Our environment is constantly changing by the increasing number of humans followed by their impact on resources. Our common future can only be guaranteed if we intelligently apply all useful technologies for both, a sustainable and a social secure use of our common water, air, soil, and biological entities.