



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18 February 2021

**INFORMAL SESSION IN PREPARATION FOR THE 24TH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY
ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

AGENDA ITEM 4 – SYNTHETIC BIOLOGY

Thank you, Chair. Thank you for giving me the floor to speak on behalf of the European Union.

First of all, we would like to thank the Secretariat for preparing the documents and for the preparation of the draft recommendation. We consider the provided working document CBD/SBSTTA/24/4/REV1 a good starting point for discussions.

The European Union supports the continuation of work on synthetic biology under the Convention on Biological Diversity and supports a process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology.

The EU supports an efficient horizon scanning process that is suitable to assess and identify the potential positive and potential negative impacts of synthetic biology vis-à-vis the three objectives of the Convention and its Protocols.

The EU would like to recall paragraph 7 of Decision 14/19, emphasizing the need for a coordinated, complementary and non-duplicative approach on issues related to synthetic biology under the Convention and its Protocols, as well as among other conventions and relevant organisations and initiatives.

The EU recognizes the work of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology in analysing and describing the relevant trends of synthetic biology.

The EU believes that multidisciplinary expertise is needed for this process and is flexible with respect to the implementation of the steps in the horizon scanning process, i.e.

- information gathering
- compilation, organisation and synthesis of the information
- assessment of the information
- reporting on the outcomes.

We suggest to clearly describe the role of the actors involved and the procedures of the process to ensure an efficient horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most recent technological developments in synthetic biology.

The EU agrees to start with two rounds of horizon scanning during two consecutive intersessional periods. The EU proposes that SBSTTA reviews the process at its 28th meeting and provides a recommendation in this regard to COP-17.

We will submit our suggested amendments to the draft recommendation in writing to the Secretariat.

Thank you very much, Chair.