



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 19 February 2021

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

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

**AGENDA ITEM 5 – RISK ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT OF LIVING MODIFIED
ORGANISMS**

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 preparing the draft recommendation. We consider the working document CBD/SBSTTA/24/5 a good starting point for discussions.

The European Union supports the continuation of work on risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms (LMOs) under the Cartagena Protocol and also wants to reconfirm the importance of the precautionary approach.

We want to stress that any additional guidance material should be of high technical and scientific quality, useful and applicable. It should address general issues for conducting risk assessment of living modified organisms containing engineered gene drives and focus on upcoming applications in the near future, like mosquitoes containing engineered gene drives.

To ensure an efficient process, we suggest a smaller expert group for the initial drafting of the additional guidance materials on engineered gene drives. These materials could be reviewed by an Open-ended Online Forum for example. The finalisation of the guidance materials could be in the hands of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group that includes specific expertise from representatives from international organisations for the final drafting process of the additional guidance materials. The expertise from the European food safety authority (EFSA) may contribute to this work and we are ready to offer this support, if needed and if requested.

We also recommend making use of existing guidance materials in order not to duplicate work.

The EU is flexible with respect to the process to be implemented and can be flexible on the exact format and procedures intended to warrant the necessary expertise and recommends clearly describing the role of the actors involved and the procedures of the process.

We trust that the process will be transparent and Party driven and will involve all stakeholders.

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

Thank you very much, Chair.