



Bayer Life Talks

Session 1

The Bio Revolution – What's in it for Europe?

9 September 2021 | Online

The United Nations estimates that the global population will reach ten billion over the next 30 years. Therefore, demand on food supplies and healthcare is expected to intensify – problems already exacerbated over the past 12 months by the impact of Covid-19.

The current pandemic has demonstrated the potential for new technologies to contribute to meeting such challenges. The virus's genome was sequenced in a matter of weeks, while the mRNA vaccines that are now being rolled out across the world are also significant for future disease treatment. The speed of the scientific response is cause for optimism and indicative of a technological revolution – a 'Bio Revolution' – in the life sciences.

In healthcare, the Bio Revolution opens the way for new approaches to diseases such as cancer, high blood pressure and rheumatoid, with the hope of being able to develop curative therapies for certain diseases. In agriculture, it aims to transform the cultivation of food while increasing yields and reducing its environmental footprint. DNA sequencing has deepened understanding of how biology works, and tools such as CRISPR, a technology that allows researchers to alter DNA sequences and modify gene function, are now being used to adapt crops to climate change, for instance.

In the end, new innovative solutions are needed if we are to reach the ambitious sustainability goals that we have given ourselves while at the same time maintaining a competitive edge on the global scale.

Earlier this year, the European Commission published its report on gene editing, and ahead of the forthcoming public consultation, this first in the series of the Bayer Life Talks, in collaboration with Forum Europe, will address the following questions:

- What are the opportunities and potential risks of gene-editing in different areas, and what comes next in terms of the innovation potential in that area?
- Which ethical and societal concerns must be taken into account when considering the opportunities of gene-editing and potential further evolutions in this area?
- What will be the legislative framework for these technologies as we advance?
- Will Europe ultimately be part of the Bio Revolution?

Agenda

(All session timings below are in CEST)

Moderator:

Paul Adamson, Chairman, Forum Europe (confirmed)

10:00 – 10:10

Opening Remarks

Stephan Schraff, Head of Public Affairs European Union, Bayer AG (confirmed)

10:10 – 11:15

Discussion

Claire Bury, Deputy Director General, DG Sante, European Commission (confirmed)

Cristian Silviu-Bușoi, Member, European Parliament (tbc)

Julian Kinderlerer, Emeritus Professor of Intellectual Property Law, University of Cape Town; European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies (EGE) (confirmed)

Jorrit Kiewik, Executive Director, Slow Food Youth Network (confirmed)

11:15

Event Close