

CARLOS MOEDAS

*Member of the European Commission*

Brussels, **10 JUL. 2018**  
Ares (2018)

Dear Chair of the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies,

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the Group as a whole for your commitment and achievements. Your work on Artificial Intelligence, the first output of the new EGE, has already been very successful and impactful.

Indeed both the report and the EGE itself have secured a central role in the new structure and strategy on Artificial Intelligence set out by the European Commission. Similarly, with the new strategy of the European Commission on mobility, the EGE will have a role in the governance of Connected and Automated Mobility.

On one hand, the EGE's mobilisation around Artificial Intelligence and related developments is ongoing. On the other hand, you are hard at work on the EGE's Opinion on the Future of Work which is to be finalised by September. And now we turn to the subsequent Opinion of the EGE, on the topic of Gene Editing, to be completed by summer 2019.

Whereas the precise scoping of the Opinion is of course for you to independently outline, it is important to note that there is tremendous need for your advice both on the bigger picture of this issue and on specific aspects of concern.

The bigger picture pertains to crossing the dividing lines which otherwise limit the ethical analysis: human and non-human; somatic and germline; research and therapeutic and enhancement purposes; agricultural, health, environmental and further areas; existing and future technologies and implications.

As to the specific aspects of concern, they pertain to gene editing applied to animals as well as gene editing in the context of biodiversity and ecosystems, in particular with regard to the development and release of organisms engineered with gene drives.

With regard to animal testing, there is a need to focus on on the development and use of transgenic techniques in non-human primates.

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Prof. Christiane Woopen  
CERES, University of Cologne  
Albertus-Magnus-Platz  
50923 Cologne  
Germany

While this set of questions is of high relevance to the European Commission as a whole, you should note that it also arises from a purposeful request for advice from the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and from the recommendations<sup>1</sup> of the Scientific Committee on Health Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER).

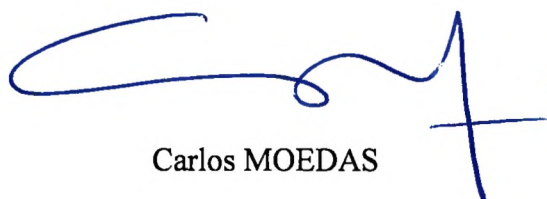
It can also be noted that this request also constitutes a response to the EGE's recommendation in its *Statement on Gene Editing* issued in January 2016, calling upon the Commission to proceed in this fashion.

With due regard for transparency, I draw your attention to the fact that the present letter of request will be made public.

I eagerly look forward to your Opinions and recommendations, and indeed to meeting with you soon.

In fact, our next meeting will come very soon, in the form of our working lunch at the European Science Open Forum, Toulouse, on 9 July, jointly with the Scientific Advice Mechanism's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors. They published an explanatory note in March 2017 on New Techniques in Agricultural Biotechnology, as you are aware, and plan to work further on this matter. The joint meeting in Toulouse provides an opportunity to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, flowing initial 'C' followed by a series of loops and a vertical stroke ending in a horizontal crossbar.

Carlos MOEDAS