News | 24.10.2017

Happy 20th anniversary Mr. Juncker!

EU Parliament voted on 20th GMO in 2 years

It's a special day for you President Juncker, and also for a majority of us in the European Parliament: this Tuesday 24 October, we reached our 20th objection to a GMO authorisation in less than two years. But sadly, we don't feel like opening a good bottle. Indeed your Commission, because of an undemocratic and un-transparent decision making process, has authorised a ridiculously high number of new GMOs during the last three years.

28 GMO authorisations in 3 years, and counting

No less than 28 GMOs have been authorised since November 2014 – the start of your mandate - and nine are still pending. This number represents half the GMOs currently authorised for import at EU level and more than all the GMOs allowed by the three previous European Commissions **combined**.

On your first address to the plenary of the European Parliament, you denounced the scandal of imposing GMOs on the majority of EU citizens, who are opposed to these biotechnologies, which makes this situation somehow surprising, not to say frustrating.

It will probably also come as a surprise to the citizens who tend to believe that, because there are almost no GMOs cultivated on European soil, it means that the EU is GMO-free. Although the situation in European farmlands and EU ecosystems is better compared to GMO-plagued America, we cannot say honestly that this perception is true.

Massive amounts of GMOs are imported to feed our farm animals

Indeed, unbeknownst to the majority of citizens who are against GMOs, a significant part of animal feed (maize, soybean, canola…) used in the EU is imported, mainly from North and South America, and is genetically modified. The EU actually uses the huge farming surfaces outside its own borders, in order to produce enough feed for its industrially farmed animals. This unhealthy reality is partially due to the too high amounts of meat and animal products consumed in, and exported by, the EU.

As a result, these land surfaces in third countries cannot be used to produce food for local populations, thus aggravating food insecurity and hunger. But it also means that people are suffering from the health and environmental impacts directly linked to the large scale cultivation of GMOs. Some of these impacts come from the massive use of the now infamous herbicide glyphosate - as you know, more than half of the

GM crops are engineered to be used with this toxic herbicide.

This is not only happening in so-called « developing countries », as is shown by the US court case where thousands of farmers suffering from cancer have taken Monsanto to court because of the carcinogenic effects of their billion dollar star product, RoundUp. GMOs and chemical-based agriculture are leaving people, and more and more farmers around the world, with a massive hangover. This is confirmed by a major new report on the damage to human health from existing industrial and chemical-intensive conventional food and farming systems, which was launched last week by the UN Committee on World Food Security in Rome (1).

A broken decision making process

The intrinsic link between GMO agriculture and chemicals like glyphosate is why the agrochemical and biotech industries have a strong interest in the EU authorizing as many GMOs as possible. We acknowledge that the current decision making process doesn't make it any easier for you as president of the European Commission to block the constant flow of submitted GMO applications.

Indeed, the EU Parliament only has a symbolic role in the matter, and the Member States have been unable to reach a common decision on these issues for the last 3 years. This leaves you and your Commissioners alone to decide, between a rock and a hard place. This situation and the threats from biotech companies to take the Commission to court (see our article on this questionable procedure), has led your Commission delivering the requested authorizations almost without a change. To fix things you did propose, although far from perfect, a reform of this broken system last February, but the Council seems very unwilling to even work on it.

Let us make a wish together

However, let us be a bit cheerful. It is customary to make a wish on anniversaries, and here is ours: we wish that your Commission would listen to our calls and make the changes that EU citizens need. These include encouraging the EU institutions to all work together towards a democratic, transparent decision making process on GMOs, the labelling of products issued from animals fed with GMOs, the rebalancing of animal and plant production for food, and a much needed EU plan to start producing our own GM-free animal feed in the EU. Part of these aims could be reached through a fairer and greener Common Agricultural Policy.

As it is not in the Greens/EFA's style to just wait for wishes to come true, we will and already are working actively towards these goals, so that farmers and consumers will have real freedom of choice. Join us, Juncker and be a champion of the people, not of the agrochemical multinationals. Maybe then, we really can raise a glass together for citizens and for the planet.

(1) The report, entitled *Unravelling the Food-Health Nexus: Addressing practices, political economy, and power relations to build healthier food systems*, is authored by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food) - an independent and global panel of food system experts - and was commissioned by the Global Alliance for the Future of Food.

Recommended

Opinion

© Christian Kaufmann



[Healthy food starts with healthy farming. Europe must …]

04.11.2026

Press release

European Council



[Meet Nicolae Ștefănuță at the Summit of Heads of State…]

15.10.2026

Press release

lebenslotse from pixabay



[Fertiliser crisis: Commission fails to break fossil de…]

19.05.2026

Press release

European External Action Service (https://www.flickr.com/photos/eeas/32978511020)



[Now is the time to transform the EU before another Orb…]

21.04.2026

Contact person



Juliette Leroux

Advisor on Agriculture and Rural Development

Please share

- E-Mail