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5 GMOs authorized for import in the EU without any political support

5 GMO authorizations were published yesterday, without any political support, neither from the Member States nor from the European Parliament. This is further proof that the decision process concerning GMOs needs to be changed quickly to a more democratic and more transparent one. The Greens/EFA are actively working to that end.

The European Commission yesterday published regulations authorizing the use of four new GM plants in food and feed: two cottons (from Monsanto and Bayer), and two maize strains (from Syngenta and Dow Agrosciences)[1]. They also renewed the authorization of the well-known maize Mon 810 from Monsanto for use in food and feed.

None of these authorizations received political support from the Member States, as they have been repeatedly unable to gather the qualified majority needed during the votes.

All of these authorizations, however, were disavowed by the European Parliament, who voiced objections against each of them, every time with comfortable voting majorities. The reasons for these objections are numerous: tolerance to herbicides dangerous for the environment and in certain cases, for health, unacceptable shortcomings in the evaluation etc. But what this really demonstrates is the inadequacy of the decision-making process concerning GMO authorization, a fact that had already been acknowledged by Jean-Claude Juncker back in 2014.

In February, the European Commission published a draft to reform this process. We welcome the opening of this much-needed debate; however, the Commission's proposal is insufficient to reach a truly democratic decision-making procedure.

We are asking for total transparency in the process: comments and votes of the Member States and names of the experts should be public at every stage. It is not acceptable that some Member States hide behind the complexity of the procedure to vote against the opinions of their own citizens. We also want the precautionary principle to be fully implemented for new products and substances - they should only be authorized if a qualified majority in favour is gathered amongst the Member States. If not, the authorization should be refused: the infamous "no opinion" situation where a political ruling goes back to the Commission due to lack of decision by the Member States is not acceptable.

We will strongly defend these necessary changes during the coming debates within the European Parliament. Indeed, far from being mere technicalities as some are arguing, this is a question of credibility and of the accountability of the EU institutions towards its citizens - an issue we should all be more invested in if we want to stop euro-scepticism.

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[1] Maize DAS-40278-9, Cotton GHB119, Cotton 281-24-236 × 3006-210-23 × MON 88913 and Maize Bt11 × 59122 × MIR604 × 1507 × GA21

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