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GREEN INSIGHT INTO EU FOOD POLICY

- Baby food: Draft rules sunk by MEPs due to provisions on sugar
- GMO: Environment Committee MEPs object to three new GM soybean authorisations

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- "New breeding Techniques": The EU Commission to put forward legal classification of these "GMOs in disguise"
- TTIP: EU-US deal: a “knock-out punch” for European farming
- CLIMATE: Our meat production and consumption also warms the planet

JOIN THE FOOD REVOLUTION: THE STORY OF THE MONTH Every month food actors who joined the 'Join the Food Revolution' network share their story, showing the way to take back control over your plate – **WHAT'S ON THE PLATE?** Upcoming Events _____
GREEN INSIGHT INTO EU FOOD POLICY

Baby food: Draft rules sunk by MEPs due to provisions on sugar

On 20th January, the European Parliament, following the initiative by Greens/EFA MEP Keith Taylor, voted to reject draft EU rules on baby food, which would have allowed baby foods to contain far higher levels of sugar than those recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO recommends 5% as a health level, while the delegated regulation proposed by the European Commission would have allowed baby foods to provide 30% of their energy from sugar (7.5g sugar/100kcal, which is equivalent to 30kcal from sugar in 100kcal energy). The European Parliament’s vote means the regulation is rejected and includes a recommendation to the Commission to review the available evidence before making a new proposal. Read more
Read our press release

GMO: Environment Committee MEPs object to three new GM soybean authorisations, asking again for a more democratic decision process

The EU Commission should withdraw its draft authorisations of the use of 3 glyphosate-tolerant GM soybeans[1] in food and feed, says a resolution voted by the Environment Committee on Thursday 21st January. This resolution was tabled by members from several political groups including MEPs Bart Staes for the Greens/EFA. MEPs point out that the herbicide glyphosate, which the three GM soybeans tolerate (along with other toxic herbicides), was classified as "probably carcinogenic" to humans on 20 March 2015 by the World Health Organization's cancer agency. But the issue is also the decision-process for these authorisations: since the current GM authorisation process has come into force, every GM authorisation decision has been taken by the Commission without the support of a qualified majority of member states. As a consequence, this turns what should be the exception into the norm. These 3 new objections follow the one voted in plenary in December, against the authorisation of GM maize variety (NK603 x T25)[2], for the very same reasons. The authorisation was however issued by the Commission a few days before the vote, in an unprecedented move that shocked the MEPs. The European Parliament rejected in October 2015 a proposal from the Commission to revise the EU system for authorising genetically-modified food and feed by allowing national opt-outs. MEPs urged the Commission to go back to the drawing board and come forward with a new proposal that properly addresses the major flaws with the EU authorisation process. This should now be a top priority for the Commission, especially as the legal services of the Council have issued recently a very similar opinion on the draft rejected by the EP. **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"New breeding Techniques": The EU Commission to put forward legal classification of these "GMOs in disguise"

New biotechnologies are techniques that have been developed in recent years to manipulate the genome of plants, animals, bacteria and humans[3]. The industry refers to them as "new breeding techniques" in order to blur the distinction between conventional breeding and these new biotechnologies. However, the new biotech methods function below the level of cells and genomes, and so, as such cannot be considered as conventional breeding. These techniques cause changes that do not occur naturally and can induce unintended changes in genetic material. These techniques can pose the same hazards to the environment and public health that "conventional" biotechnology procedures do. Since 2008, 7 of these techniques have been under scrutiny to decide if they fall under the Directive 2001/18 and give GM plants and products (that need to be assessed, authorised on a case by case process, labelled and traceable) or not. A "new techniques working group" has been created in 2008 by the Commission but was not able to reach a unanimous conclusion. Because of the increasing pressure from Member States, industry, and rural protection and environmental organisations, the European Commission announced that it would put forward proposals for legal classifications of eight new techniques in early 2016 (probably March). They indicated that Member States, the European Parliament and the stakeholders would only be consulted on the draft. There will be no legislative procedure involving the Council or the European Parliament. The Greens/EFA group advocates[4], together with numerous NGOs and with the organic movement that these new breeding techniques are clearly and undoubtedly biotechnologies and as such should:

- undergo a case by case risk assessment,
- be labelled for the farmers and consumers to be able to choose to buy them or not,
- and be monitored to make sure they are not polluting our environment.

This means they have to be defined officially as "genetically modified organisms" in the framework of the existing EU regulation on biotechnologies, contrary to the demands of their supporters and of some Member states, who are asking for deregulation. **TTIP: EU-US deal: a "knock-out punch" for European farming** The TTIP negotiations, which will enter their 12th round of talks on February 22nd, aim to in part reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers on agricultural produce. But a wide-gulf exists between

the farming practices in both regions, in particular on controversial processes banned in the EU but commonplace in the US. They include the often-cited US practice of washing chicken in chlorine, to the use of growth-promoting hormones in pigs and cattle, differences in treatment of genetically modified crops, processes that the US agri-industry is lobbying hard for the EU to accept. A series of studies in recent months shed an increasingly negative light on the impact TTIP will have on European agriculture, if an agreement is eventually reached. Read more

CLIMATE: Our meat production and consumption also warms the planet

by Florent Marcellesi, EQUO (Spanish Greens) spokesperson in the European Parliament (@fmarcellesi) and the EQUO Animal Rights Group (@equoanimales). If we are what we eat, nowadays we are, without doubt, climate change. Our diets, rich in animal proteins, fed by an intensive industrial production of meat and fish, are one of the main causes of global warming. However, livestock farming and meat consumption are the poor cousins of the climate negotiations that culminated in the COP21 summit in Paris in last December. Let's analyse the current situation to develop strategies and action plans. ***Livestock farming: climate change winner...*** According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), it is well known that livestock farming is the sector with the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions rates, with approximately the 18%, after the transport sector which represents the 22% of GHG emissions. This is 9% of the global CO2 emissions, 37% of methane (more than mining exploitation, oil and natural gas!) and 65% of NO2, with these last two having a higher impact on greenhouse gas increase than CO2. Much of this is due to deforestation as a result of land use change caused by expansion of shepherding and fodder farming, the ruminants digestive process (methane), production and storage of manure (NO2) and finally, production and transportation of livestock products. In particular, 10% of the planet's agricultural land is used for pasture and the other 10% is for the production of cereals to feed them. And on top of that, the official estimates seem rather optimistic. According to the World Bank, if we were to count all indirect emissions, the livestock sector would be at the top of the climate change ranking, responsible for more than half of the global GHG emissions. Finally, meat consumption, and therefore the level of emissions, depend on where we live: for example, an American consumes 120 kilograms of meat and emits 17,6 tonnes of CO2; a Spaniard, 97 kilograms and 8,6 tonnes; a Rwandan, 6,5 kilograms and 0,08 tonnes. The global average is 40 kilograms of meat consumption and 4 tonnes of CO2 emissions. While in order to respect the planet's limits, it is recommended that the consumption of meat does not exceed 20 kilograms on average and emissions, 2 tonnes of CO2. Meat consumption and climate change are also an environmental and social justice issue. ***… but absent in the Paris agreement*** Taking into account these figures, one would think that livestock farming (and fish farming) was a priority in the climate change talks in Paris. But, not at all! The final agreement for the COP21, much more focused on the food production and food security concepts[5], does not even mention the livestock farming sector, nor does it mentions meat and fish consumption which are the results of this industrial and intensive production. Not visible at all at an international level, the emissions linked to this sector are only presents in the national plans. And let's note that on a practical and symbolic point of view, the COP21 summit was not much veggie or, at least, animal welfare and rights friendly. The debate on livestock farming has been left to another forum, the 'Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock' (GASL). In this forum, agrobusiness multinationals, governments and also some NGOs set out, in a completely voluntary way (as the talks are not part of the official negotiations carried out by the United Nations), a livestock system that allows "food safety, equity, growth and climate protection". Beside the fact that animals are sadly considered as goods to serve human beings, the GASL agenda is a contradiction in itself. Trying to increase meat consumption and at the same time trying to reduce the GHG emissions and the suffering and objectification of living beings, is contradictory. Pretending to disconnect growth and CO2 emissions, as well as growth and animal abuse, is a mirage in intensive livestock and fish farming. It is necessary to choose between climate and growth! Real solutions and a new strategy Fighting climate change while strengthening animal rights follows a different path: reducing meat and fish consumption so that it fits within an admissible and ecological frame and, in those cases where meat will be consumed occasionally, supply eco-friendly meat from extensive and local livestock farming. Besides bringing this issue to climate negotiations, this means two complementary

action plans:

1. At the production level, building a new model that allows transition from global and intensive livestock farming (and fish farming) to local and extensive livestock farming. Instead of pursuing the purely mercantile goal of producing the maximum amount of meat in the shortest time possible - at the expense of nature, animal welfare and human health - the goal would be to produce less quantity but better quality. This means that when meat production is reduced, impact on the climate is also reduced. The use of animals for food is decommoficated, land is liberated to grow vegetal proteins and the power of small farmers and aware costumers is increased.
2. At the consumption level, eating less meat and substituting animal proteins for vegetal proteins. Besides the health benefits (as the World Health Organisation reminded us of recently when linking red meat consumption with cancer) and the consequences for global justice, if Spain were to return to a Mediterranean diet, greenhouse gas emissions linked to food production would decrease more than 70%! The CO2 emissions of vegetarians are 50% less than of those consuming meat daily and the emissions of vegans are 60% less. This is normal: producing 1 kilogram of beef emits 27 kilogram of the CO2-eq and for the same quantity of lentils the emission is only 1 kilogram (all this without considering the difference in water and land consumption and the biodiversity impact).

Considering these two objectives and picking up Jorge Riechmann's proposal, we could articulate a broad political and social coalition in favour of climate, animals, healthy diet and a lively land, sea and rivers. In this transversal and plural coalition, ecologists could join animal welfare and rights activists, small extensive farmers, landrace defenders, healthy diet activists and aware consumers. Even if we do not share exactly the same approaches and goals, this alliance of concrete objectives would allow a substantial improvement in the fight against climate change, and the defence of human health and animal rights.
JOIN THE FOOD REVOLUTION: THE STORY OF THE MONTH Jane owns a unique organic farm shop called @lantis in her hometown Almarkaröd, Horby, Sweden. You can buy products from the shop on the spot but also online, and get fresh fruits vegetables and farm eggs at your doorstep! And don't miss, Jane's café, right next to the shop, where you can find hot food from the season, usually vegetarian or vegan and always organic. Get to know more about Jane and Join the Food Revolution yourself! **WHAT'S ON THE PLATE? 26/01:** Press conference: Long term effects of the ingestion of a genetically modified plant on farm animals, 14.30 European Parliament, room 0A50 (for badges contact Juliette.Leroux@europarl.europa.eu)

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[1] FG72, MON 87708 x MON 89788 and MON 87705 x MON 89788 [2] http://www.greens-efa.eu/gmo-authorisation-15010.html [3]Examples of such methods are cisgenesis, oligonucleotide-directed mutagenesis,... A full list of the techniques currently available for discussion can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/gmo/new/legislation/plant_breeding/index_en.htm [5] The Paris Agreement recognizes “the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the particular vulnerabilities of food production systems to the adverse impacts of climate change” and the article 2 stands that: “Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production”.

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Opinion

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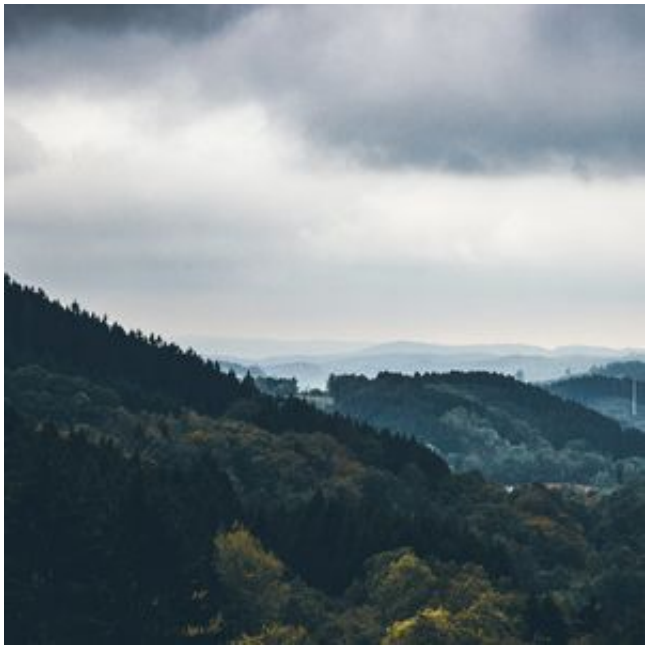


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