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News | 21.03.2017

The European Commission is tabling science fiction legislation on GMOs

20 types of GM maize have been proposed for authorisation in feed and food... some of them do not even exist yet!



20 different kinds of GM maize in the same text

The European Commission has come forward with a proposal for the authorisation of a new GM maize for use in food and feed - meaning it could be imported into the EU, where it is at least not allowed for cultivation. Except it is not only **one** GM maize crop that is on the table, but more than 20 variations.

Indeed, the proposal is to authorise a GM maize from Syngenta that combines five different GM characteristics (mainly tolerance to the herbicides glyphosate and glufosinate, and resistance to the corn

borer[1]) and all their sub combinations. **This means one single authorisation would allow more than 20 different types of maize to be imported and manufactured into food for human consumption or feed for animals**.

The Commission wants to allow import of untested 'ghost' GM plants

This is already a bit disturbing, but it becomes positively problematic when we learn that only a few of these combinations have actually been assessed for safety by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and that most of them have not even been created yet!

Even within EFSA, this very original evaluation procedure has raised questions. The EFSA scientific opinion includes an interesting minority opinion by one of the GMO panel members, which states that: "*No specific data regarding any of those 20 sub-combinations have been provided by the Applicant, who also did not give a satisfactory rationale explaining the reasons why those data are missing and/or why he would consider that they are not necessary for the risk assessment.*"

The same minority opinion also criticises the controversial 'weight of evidence approach', which gives an overvalued importance to industry non-peer reviewed studies in the evaluation process (see our article on this issue).

EU Parliament and Member states' expert to give opinion

The Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed, made up of representatives of EU countries, was not able to come to an opinion on the Commission's draft on January 27 (a recurring problem concerning GMOs). The text will now be submitted to an appeal committee on March 27. In the absence of an opinion from this appeal committee, the decision will come back to the Commission, who may very well approve this highly controversial and unconventional authorisation.

Several members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have already tabled an objection to this authorisation, which was voted today (21 March) in the Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee. It will proceed to be voted on by all MEPs. Although the Commission is not legally obliged to act on the Parliament's wishes, a rejection of the authorisation by MEPs would be a huge blow to its credibility.

The first step however, is to persuade EU countries in the appeal committee that this authorisation would be madness, twentyfold.

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