Press release | 29.03.2011

Clone food

Blow for consumers as government obstinacy on clone food leads to collapse of 'novel foods' rules

'Conciliation negotiations' between the European Parliament and Council on EU legislation on novel foods, which has included a crucial debate on clone food, collapsed early this morning with no agreement. The Greens have consistently argued for a ban on food from clones and their descendents to be included in the legislation, a position that was supported by a cross-political majority in the European Parliament. The EP had been willing to make compromises but the talks collapsed as the Council refused all compromise efforts. After the negotiations, Green MEP **Bart Staes** said:

"The sheer obstinacy of member state governments in Council on the issue of clone food has led to the collapse of the negotiations on EU rules on novel foods. There is overwhelming public concern about food from clones and their descendants (1), and a clear majority of the European Parliament voted for the introduction of a ban on clone food in response to these concerns (2). However, in spite of this clear public opposition to clone food, Council was unwilling to even discuss a proper labelling scheme for food from clones and their offspring.

"Council's intransigence on regulating food from the descendants of clones is wrongheaded, as it is ultimately these descendents, and not the original clones, that will be used for food production. The claims that there are no animal welfare concerns resulting to clone offspring flies in the face of the evidence, while even EFSA admits the long term health impacts of clone food have not been properly assessed. It is little more than window-dressing to ban cloning in Europe but allow the import of reproductive material from clones and selling food from the offspring of clones.

"A sound labelling requirements for food from clone offspring would have at least have ensured that consumers could take a decision if they want to buy clone food or not. However, the Council even opposed this EP proposal. Allowing food from the offspring of clones to be sold on the EU market without proper labelling effectively means giving the go-ahead to clone food in Europe."

Green MEP **Satu Hassi** added:

"The European Commission has played an inglorious role in these negotiations, proactively pushing EU member states to resist any ban on clone food. It is highly regrettable that the Commission is more concerned with the interests of its trading partners in third countries and their niche industry, than the will of the majority of EU citizens.

"The Commission must now come forward with a revised proposal on 'novel foods' rules. It must also stick to its pledge to present specific legislation on cloning by March 2013 at latest. In the interim, the EP will try to find a way to incorporate the labelling of clone food products in the proposed EU legislation on food information to consumers, which is currently in the legislative process."

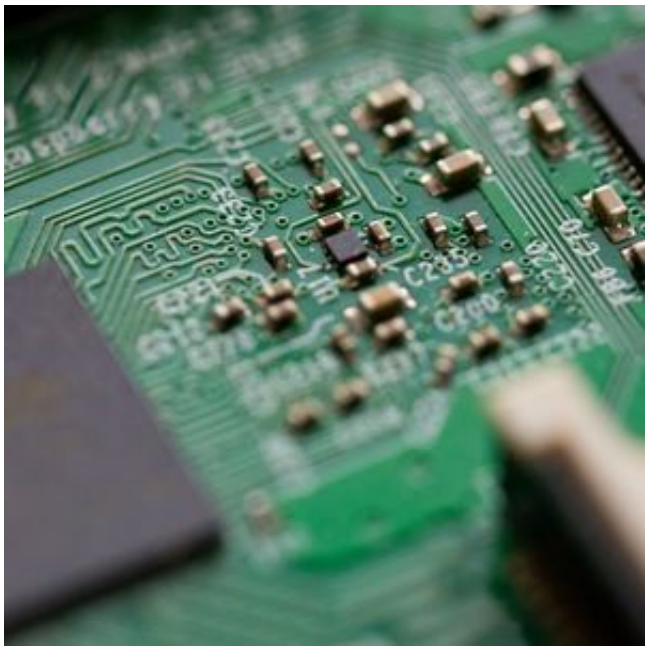
(1) A large majority of EU citizens are concerned about out animal cloning and food from clones: http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/resources/docs/eurobarometer_cloning_sum_en.pdf

(2) A cross-political majority of the European Parliament voted to support a ban on food from clones and their descendants in the 2nd reading vote.

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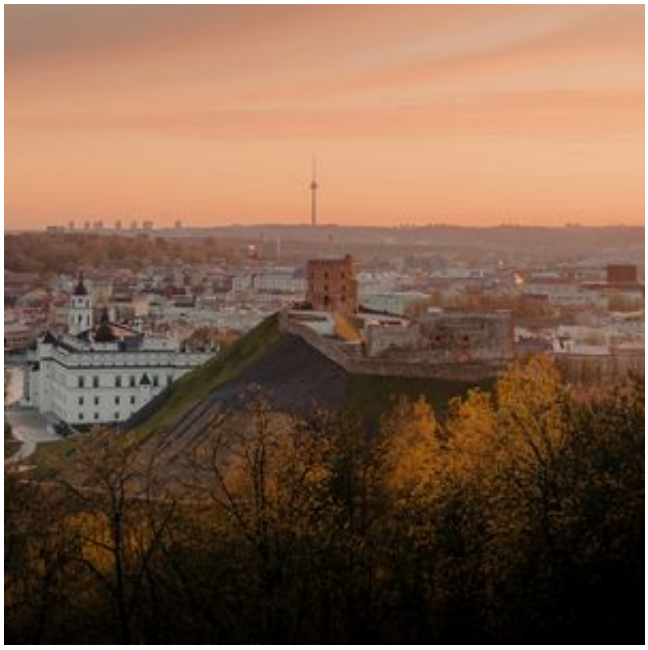
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