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Press release | 07.05.2014

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

Food industry lobbyists proposed for EFSA Management Board

Representatives of the EU Member States today decided to nominate food industry lobbyists to the Management Board of EFSA, the EU's Food Safety Authority.

Commenting on these nominations, **José Bové**, Greens/EFA MEP and Vice-Chair of the agriculture committee, stated:

"This decision, which must still be confirmed by the Council of Ministers of the European Union, sends out a worrying signal concerning EFSA's independence and objectivity. EFSA has already come under fire in the past for its lack of independence and conflicts of interest within both its Management Board and its scientific panels, including the GMO panel. As a result of this, for the first time in the history of all EU agencies, EFSA's budget discharge was last year postponed. The European Ombudsman judged that EFSA had failed to satisfactorily manage conflicts of interest.

"The Member States do not appear to have understood how crucial it is for the EU agency regulating food safety to be entirely free from industry influence and conflicts of interest. Two years after Ms Diana Banati's forced departure from EFSA and her return to the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI, the world's biggest food industry lobby) where she was appointed to a directorship, the lesson still hasn't been learnt. At a time when these same Member States are discussing the possibility of improving the risk assessment for GMOs at EU level, which comes under EFSA's competence, appointing two people linked to the food industry to EFSA's Management Board will only increase mistrust of GMO assessments. It is high time to end lobbying influence and I urge the Ministers, who will have the final say, to refuse these unacceptable agreements with industry. More than ever, we need reliable and objective assessments on the potential risks from GMOs, pesticides and food nano-ingredients."

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José Bové

Member

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