Press release | 11.02.2014

GM maize authorisation

Council opposition to GM maize authorisation must be recognised by EU Commission

EU governments today voted in the General Affairs Council on a proposal by the European Commission to authorise the cultivation of a variety of GM maize in the EU for the first time in 15 years (GM maize 1507). The outcome revealed a majority of EU member states against the authorisation but falling short of the qualified majority required for outright rejection. The Greens called on the Commission to acknowledge this opposition and withdraw the proposed authorisation, with health and food safety spokesman **Bart Staes** stating:

"Today's Council vote has revealed opposition from EU member states to the authorisation of this new GM maize, with a majority of EU governments voting against. Coming on top of last month's vote by the European Parliament to oppose the authorisation and consistent public opposition to GMOs, this underlines that there is no democratic mandate for authorising this GM maize variety. Forcing through the authorisation against this background would be an affront to the democratic process and we are calling on the Commission to recognise this and withdraw its proposal.

"There are many concerns with the proposed authorisation of this new variety of genetically modified maize (1507, marketed as Herculex outside the EU), notably as regards its potential impact on pollinators, such as butterflies, as well as soil organisms. Crucially, there has not been a proper assessment of the risks associated with it, particularly as regards its resistance to certain types of herbicide. The legality of the process to authorise this maize is also questionable, as revealed by the recent ECJ decision on the GM potato Amflora. This, combined with the clear opposition of European citizens to GMOs, means it should not have been proposed in the first place. With the European Parliament and now a record number of EU member states in Council also underlining this opposition, the Commission must not push ahead.

"Beyond this, there is a need to reform the EU's GMO authorisation process. We cannot persist with the current situation by which authorisations proceed in spite of the consistent opposition of a majority of EU member states in Council. The partial renationalisation of competences on GM cultivation, proposed by the Commission but stalled in the legislative process, risks being a Trojan Horse. It must not be a trick to allow the Commission to force through swifter and easier EU level authorisations. Any new approval procedure should not be a tool for the Commission to bully EU member states into accepting authorisations for GM crops for which legitimate concerns clearly exist but rather take account of the consistent and legitimate opposition to this controversial technology."

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Opinion

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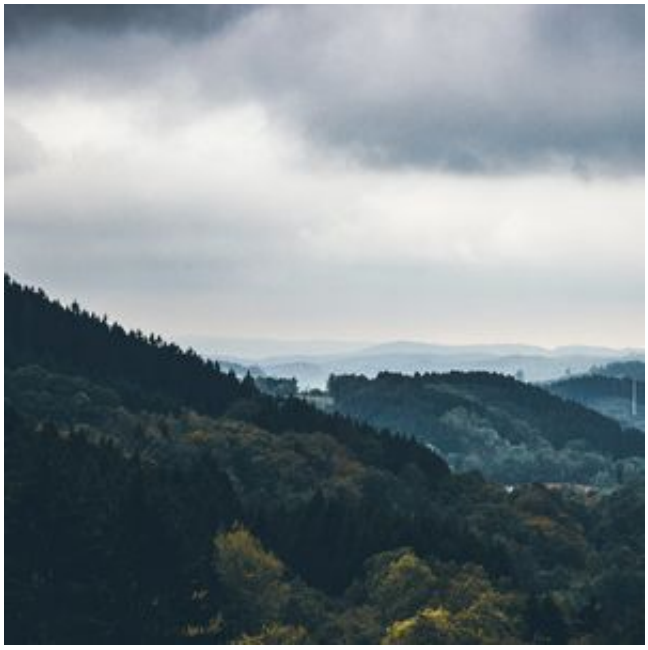


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Bart Staes

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