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GMO approvals

EU Commission continues down slippery slope of easing way for GMOs in Europe

The European Commission today presented a proposal for a new scheme of renationalising decisions on GMOs in the EU. The proposals would introduce the possibility for EU member states to restrict trade of GMOs within their territory without touching the authorisation procedure for GMOs as such. Commenting on the proposals, Green food safety spokesperson **Bart Staes** said:

“The Juncker Commission is continuing down the slippery slope of easing the way for GMOs in Europe. The proposed new scheme for authorising food and feed containing GMOs follows the same logic of the recent revision of rules for authorising genetically-modified crops for cultivation.

“By providing the "carrot" to EU member states to opt out of European level authorisations, it is clear that the Commission is looking to make the decision-making process on EU authorisations easier. This is a completely wrong-headed approach to take to address the situation at hand.

“Commission president Juncker promised to make the EU’s GMO authorisation process more democratic; there is a fundamental difference between a more democratic authorisation scheme and a scheme that will make it easier to reach decisions on EU authorisations. Making the process more democratic would imply changing the current model, both to reflect the consistent opposition of a clear majority of EU citizens to GMOs and to ensure that the Commission cannot push ahead with the authorisation when a majority of EU member states votes against an authorisation.

"Instead of just applying the same unsatisfactory model for GMO cultivation authorisation to food and feed imports, there is a need to introduce a coherent democratic authorisation system that applies to both imports and cultivation. We will now fight for a real 'democratisation' of the authorisation process when the European Parliament and Council decide on the final legislation.

“It is also deeply cynical that the Commission is planning to usher through the authorisation of 17 GMOs in the coming week at the same time as it is acknowledging that the current authorisation system is flawed. This casts serious doubt over the motivations of the Commission. The Commission should be heeding the legitimate concerns of European citizens, rather than bowing to the demands of biotech corporations.

"These moves on GMOs by the Commission cannot be seen in isolation from the ongoing EU-US TTIP negotiations. Just yesterday Bob Young, the chief lobbyist of the large American agro-businesses said that

for the US 'geographical indicators and GM crops are red lines'. In other words Europe has to accept their wishes. This is unacceptable"

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Bart Staes

Member

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