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Press release | 12.04.2011

GMO rules

EP votes to strengthen hand of member states that want to prohibit GMO cultivation

The European Parliament's environment committee today voted on proposed new EU rules on the cultivation of genetically modified crops. The Greens are concerned with the general approach of the original proposal, which implies a renationalisation of authorisations, but welcomed the committee vote, which would clearly strengthen the position of member states wanting to prohibit GMO cultivation. Speaking after the vote, Green MEP and shadow draftsman (rapporteur) **Bart Staes** said:

"This vote would clearly strengthen the hand of member states that want to prohibit GMO cultivation under the proposed new rules, ensuring they have a watertight basis for banning cultivation. The vote would also ensure member states can ban GMO cultivation on environmental grounds - such as to protect biodiversity - or if there is contradictory or inadequate data on the impact of cultivating a GM crop.

"Given the very real concerns of cross-contamination of conventional crops by GM crops, including cross border contamination, we welcome the broad consensus to make anti-contamination measures mandatory. Member states that still do not have 'coexistence' measures in place have to adopt them. MEPs also supported a Green amendment calling on member states to establish a strict liability system to ensure the polluter pays for damages that might occur due to the cultivation or placing on the market of GMOs."

Green MEP and shadow draftsperson (rapporteur) **Margrete Auken** added:

"The Commission is hoping that partially renationalising competences on GM cultivation, will lead to swifter and easier EU level authorisations. This cloak and dagger approach to GM authorisations is at total odds with public will, with a large majority of EU citizens opposed to GMOs. Clearly, an EU moratorium on GMOs is the only true way to respond to these concerns, however, these new rules 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.

"Crucially, MEPs today voted that no new GMO variety shall be authorised until the risk assessment provisions are properly implemented. This means ending the principle of substantial equivalence or 'comparative safety assessment' as a basis for risk assessment. MEPs also voted to ensure that access to material necessary for independent research must not be restricted."

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Margrete Auken

Member



Bart Staes

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