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Press release | 02.08.2013

GMOs

French court lifts France's ban on growing GM maize

France's highest court (Conseil d'Etat) yesterday lifted the government ban on growing Monsanto's genetically modified maize MON810. This decision follows a ruling from the European Court of Justice that stated that the government ban on the cultivation of MON810 was not justified by an imminent and serious environmental threat, despite increasing evidence to the contrary.

The Greens/EFA group regrets this decision and urges the French government to enact a new ban with a stronger legal basis. The Greens think that there's so much uncertainty about the irreversible impacts of this maize that EU laws should uphold the precautionary measure and maintain the ban.

Commenting on the decision, Green MEP **José Bové**, Vice-Chair of the agriculture and rural development committee, said:

"This ruling should be a wake-up call to Europe to definitively turn the page on GMO cultivation and focus instead on moving towards environmentally sustainable agriculture."

Since 1998, when MON810 was allowed onto the EU market, eight member states representing the main EU maize producers banned its cultivation: France, Germany, Poland, Italy, Luxemburg, Austria, Hungary and Greece. Only Spain and Portugal grow MON810 on a significant scale. However, only France has been sued for its ban. The Commission has also tried to lift the ban in Austria and Hungary, but was countered by a qualified majority in the Council.

As MON810, which has now been on the EU market for ten years, is going through an authorisation renewal process, the Greens/EFA group calls on France and all other pro-moratorium countries to work together to reject the renewal and demand long-term health and environmental studies, which have until now been lacking. The authorization process must fully assess whether insecticide-producing or herbicide tolerant plants are compatible with sustainable farming. Until these conditions are met, GMO cultivation should be banned in Europe.

France's Conseil d'Etat decision shows that concerns relating to the health and environmental safety of GMOs and their cultivation are at odds with legal considerations.

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Opinion

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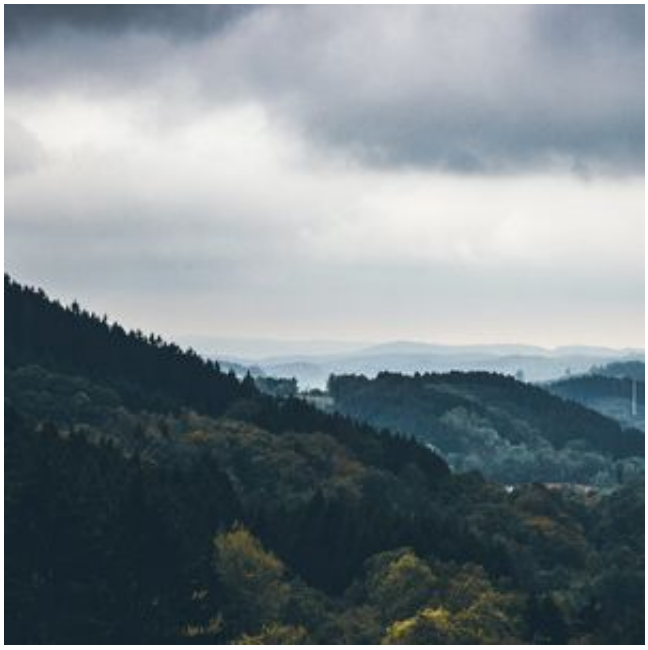


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