



Brussels, 4 March 2010

Mr John DALLI
Commissioner
Health and Consumer Policy

Dear Commissioner,

We write regarding the Commission's decision to authorise the cultivation of the 'Amflora' potato. We are shocked that you have made a decision on such a highly controversial issue without waiting for the results of the review on EFSA's environmental risk assessment guidelines.

You are probably aware that it is broadly accepted that the long-term-effects of GMO cultivation as well as effects on non-target organisms have, thus far, not adequately been taken into account in the risk assessment framework¹. In your role as a risk manager, it is not possible to blindly follow EFSA's opinion on 'Amflora', even though you are aware that serious concerns have been raised regarding the lack of information on environmental impact as well as the very poorly conducted feeding trials.

Furthermore, 'Amflora' contains a gene which conveys resistance to antibiotics classified as 'critically important' and 'increasingly important' by the WHO and EMEA. We find it highly questionable that you as the Health Commissioner authorise a GM plant with an antibiotic marker gene, against the warning of the Authority under your responsibility, European Medicines Agency². It is irresponsible to authorise varieties for which no or insufficient toxicity or allergy tests have been conducted when these varieties have undergone genetic modifications that have significant and wide-ranging effects in plant metabolism.

In addition, you are certainly aware that there are two conventional potato varieties already on the market which show the same characteristics as 'Amflora', but which have not been genetically modified. As resistance to antibiotics are a widely recognised medical problem, any unnecessary use of this technology is unjustifiable. How can you place the interests of one company higher than that of the overwhelming majority of European consumers, who are against GMOs?

With regard to your token gift to Member States - the idea of 'renationalising' the decision on cultivation of GMOs - we are very concerned that this will contradict the provisions of the internal market as well as threaten the freedom of choice for consumers. You are aware that in small-scale European agriculture, contamination does not stop at borders.

Last but not least, we are very disappointed that your commitment to 'transparency' vis-à-vis the European Parliament seems to be restricted to informing us about a decision as a 'fait accompli', that is, a few hours before you publish it.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

Rebecca Harms
Co-President

Daniel Cohn-Bendit
Co-President

¹ see e.g. Conclusions of the Council of Environmental Ministers of December 2008;
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/envir/104509.pdf

² EMEA CVMP/56937/2007; <http://www.ema.europa.eu/pdfs/human/opinionongen/5693707en.pdf>