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NEW GMO APPROVALS

There is a risk that new GMO approvals could be granted within the EU. Six new varieties of GM maize have already received a positive opinion from the European Food Safety Authority (which has in fact never given a negative opinion on GMOs) and are in the final stages of the authorisation process. As there have been only two GM crops authorised for growing in the EU in the last 15 years, the authorisation of new GM crops would be a major negative development. The European Commission should not proceed with any new approvals until the assessment and authorisation process has been overhauled and improved.

CROP CONTAMINATION AND HONEY

The European Court of Justice has ruled that honey contaminated with GM maize is illegal and cannot be sold in the EU. The problems raised with contaminated honey show that the coexistence of GM and non-GM crops is not possible and that GMO-contaminated (illegal) honey is being sold in EU stores while consumers are not informed. GMO cultivation must be halted to prevent contamination and protect bees, beekeepers and honey. No GMO authorisation should be granted until the risks of cross-contamination have been addressed.

PATENTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

By claiming that GM seeds are "inventions", biotech companies have succeeded in securing patents and thus exclusive intellectual property rights to plant varieties. Building on this precedent, the same industry is now seeking to patent conventional breeding methods and plant varieties, claiming intellectual property rights to living processes. The patenting of all life forms should be definitively outlawed in the EU as life cannot be considered as an invention or a commercial product.



The Greens/EFA group is fighting for:

- a GMO-free Europe;
- an end to conflicts of interest at the European Food Safety Authority;
- risk assessment based on independent scientific expertise that is transparent, rigorous and multidisciplinary;
- the labelling of products from animals that have been fed with GMOs;
- zero-tolerance policy for non-authorized GMOs in food;
- the protection of bees, beekeepers and honey from genetic contamination;
- no new GMO approvals to be granted;
- a ban on patents on life and life forms.



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FOR A GMO-FREE EUROPE



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Why the Greens/EFA Group is opposed to the cultivation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and GM foods

The main reasons the Greens/EFA group is opposed to GMOs are:

- GMOs are **novel organisms** which can become unstoppable in nature. They can be responsible for **irreversible genetic contamination** and contaminate all of our agriculture and food systems.
- The environmental and health impacts of GMOs are **unpredictable**.
- GMOs are being used by agrochemical companies to patent plants under the pretext they are novel organisms in the same way industrial goods are patented. Patents on life are not acceptable.
- Expanding GMO use would deprive farmers of **control over seeds**, with the rights for GMOs controlled by a handful of multinational agro-chemical companies. This would give these companies significant influence over our food supply system.
- GMOs are a cornerstone of an **industrial agriculture system**, which is incompatible with sustainable agriculture, aimed at ensuring long-term food security for the planet's population.

- EU citizens are massively opposed to GMOs in the fields and on their plates. There is no reason for companies to try to impose GMOs against people's will.
- GMOs are not efficient for farmers as they either have pesticides embedded or lead to an increased use of herbicides.

The Greens/EFA group wants a ban on the release of GMOs into the environment. It has been campaigning on the issue for 15 years and is the only parliamentary group that has been consistent in its opposition to the deliberate release of GMOs.

Biotech companies have yet to make a major breakthrough in the EU with regard to GMOs (with only 2 GMO crops so far authorised for cultivation) and resistance is growing. Many European regions are uniting forces in a strong network fighting for GMO-free zones and uncontaminated seeds. While GMOs in food must be labelled under EU law, more needs to be done to guarantee EU citizens can choose not to have GMOs in the food chain.

GMO RISKS AND WEAK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments of GMOs in the EU are questionable. GMOs are supposed to be authorised only after a thorough scientific risk assessment. The European Food Safety Authority, which is responsible for GMO assessments, is tainted by conflicts of interest. This raises major questions about the methodology EFSA is using to assess GMOs and its conclusions on the safety of GMOs.

There needs to be a complete and independent review of the risk assessment guidelines and of all GMO approvals. Authorisations already given for GMOs should be suspended. Future assessments should also include the socioeconomic consequences of the introduction of GMOs into agricultural systems and the benefits for society as a whole.

LABELLING

Although food containing GMOs must be labelled under EU law, this does not apply to animals that have been fed with GMOs and food products derived from these animals unfortunately. As a result, large amounts of GMOs enter the food chain through animal feed, with consumers kept in the dark. Only a few countries (Austria, France and Germany) have a regulation that allows producers to voluntarily label products from animals fed without GMOs, so the information on the use of GMOs in the food chain is very sparse. All consumers should have the right and possibility to choose GMO-free food.



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GMOS THROUGH THE BACKDOOR

Due to the unavoidable genetic contamination from GM crops, the European Commission has already allowed GMOs not authorised in the EU to be present in small amounts in animal feed and is now preparing a similar measure for food products. This means that food containing GMOs not authorised in the EU at levels up to 0.1% would be allowed on the market with no information. This undermines the whole EU approval process, the precautionary principle and the right to GMO-free food. The EU should uphold a zero tolerance policy for non-authorised GMOs.



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