



**The Greens | European Free Alliance**  
in the European Parliament

John Dalli  
Member of the European Commission

Strasbourg, 12 June 2012

Dear Commissioner Dalli,

Member States have not been able to reach a compromise on the "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2001/18/EC as regards the possibility for the Member States to restrict or prohibit the cultivation of GMOs in their territory" at yesterday's Environment Council. The issue of GMOs thus remains as contentious as ever.

There are several reasons for the opposition to the proposal. In December 2008, Member States stressed, inter alia, the need to tighten the risk assessment rules, to take account of the socio-economic consequences of the introduction of GMOs, and to make industry research data available for independent researchers. It is understandable that Member States first want to see progress on these points before they start defining which local conditions could eventually warrant taking national or regional measures. Indeed, the EU is responsible for ensuring the highest possible level of safety for EU citizens and the environment. This absolute objective of EU policy cannot be compromised in exchange for more freedom for national measures.

However, you have on several occasions indicated that you would be willing to resume the process of allowing new GMOs for commercial cultivation on EU territory if the Council fails to come to agreement on the proposal. We believe this would be the worst possible signal to be sending the European public at a time when EFSA, as the scientific agency in charge of GMO risk assessment, is under scrutiny due to its links with industry.

The 'revolving doors' case of Ms Banati clearly demonstrates how close industry's relations with EFSA were, and how profound the potential influence on EFSA's opinions. Moreover, the case of Suzy Renckens was recently addressed by the European ombudsman; who is also currently examining the case of Harry Kuiper. Because of the doubts about EFSA's independence and suspicions of conflicts of interest, the European Parliament has, for the first time in 10 years, voted to postpone EFSA discharge for 2010.

This background of EFSA's integrity being questioned undoubtedly gives European citizens food for thought, particularly when they realise that all opinions on GMOs delivered by EFSA have so far been positive.

All the GMOs that you might want to propose to the Committee soon (six varieties of genetically modified maize) have been assessed using very questionable risk assessment methods, data and procedures. Independent studies have found flaws with all six risk assessments but these findings have been systematically rejected by EFSA. Furthermore, the guidelines for GMO risk assessments are in the process of being changed, because they have been found to be insufficient.



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EU citizens are still overwhelmingly opposed to GMOs and do not trust the agency that assesses them. You have expressed your concern and your belief in the importance of upholding public trust in EFSA and the GMO authorisation process. We therefore ask you to restore public confidence by not approving any new GMO varieties and not renewing old ones before the risk assessment methods have been improved.

This is the only way to unblock the situation regarding the 2011 Commission proposal on cultivation of GMOs. For EFSA's scientific independence to be restored, it is imperative to cut all the links between it and industry. It is moreover absolutely necessary to review all the risk assessments that have been performed on individual GMOs as well as the guidelines for the risk assessments, as they have been drawn up by scientific panels that have been accused of being influenced by industry.

Greens/EFA will denounce any attempt to authorize or renew the authorization for commercial growing of GMOs in the EU until EFSA's scientific credibility is restored and until the health, environmental and socio-economic consequences of GMOs and their real benefits for society as a whole are assessed with no influence from industry.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Harms

Daniel Cohn-Bendit

Co-Presidents  
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