



06.08.14

EU needs a legally sound mechanism for prohibiting GM cultivation and independent risk assessment

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

In June, the EU member states' environment ministers voted in favor of a so-called 'Opt-Out' mechanism for the cultivation of genetically modified (GM) plants. They claim that this will make it 'easier' for national governments to ban the cultivation of certain GM plants. Is this really a great success for the millions of European citizens who do not want genetically modified organisms, neither in the fields nor in their food?

We think not. Although the European Commission and Council are hailing 'Opt-Out' as progress, the Council's decision is fundamentally flawed. Particularly when member states have to ask GM companies via the Commission whether they would refrain from the cultivation of their plants on a particular state's territory. Only if they refuse can the government prohibit cultivation – without knowing whether the legal basis is sound if it goes to a lawsuit. Elected representatives and sovereign governments would have to act as petitioner in front of GM corporations such as Monsanto – which would be hard to explain to citizens.

You, as a Member of the European Parliament, can play an important role when it comes to the regulation of GM plants. The parliament did so in 2011, when in a first reading, MEP voted in favor of considerably strengthening the precautionary principle and of a fundamental overhaul of GMO risk assessment. They did so in the context of allegations that the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was relying heavily on data delivered by the GM industry and that some of EFSA's experts were involved with the industry's lobbying organizations at the same time. Even the European Court of Auditors has criticized EFSA over 'conflicts of interest'.

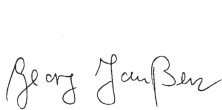
Please, make sure that 'Opt-Out' is considerably revised in the relevant committees. It should protect consumers and the environment, not the interests of GM companies. On the basis of the European Parliament's decision of 05.07.2011, we are asking you to:

- 1) strengthen the precautionary principle in the risk assessment and cultivation of genetically modified plants;
- 2) ensure that EFSA's risk assessment of GMO is independent and rigorous;
- 3) ensure that national prohibition of GM cultivation is based on EU environmental law (Article 192 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union) which would make them more legally sounder and binding;
- 4) help to protect the sovereignty of the EU and its member states by ensuring that they are not obliged to ask GM companies before they can prohibit the cultivation of GM plants;
- 5) ensure that prohibiting the cultivation of GM plants will be possible at any time without having

- to provide 'new objective circumstances';
- 6) help protect the many GM-free farmers and food producers by ensuring that an appropriate period of time must be respected before a ban on the cultivation of GM plants can be revoked.

Numerous opinion polls have shown that EU voters oppose genetically modified plants in agriculture and in their food. Now it is up to you to engage in the negotiations with Commission and Council to provide member states with a genuine opportunity to prohibit the cultivation of GM plants, to ensure that risk assessment is carried out rigorously and that member states' full sovereignty is protected.

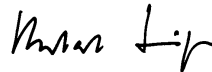
Kind regards,



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on behalf of:

Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (European Coordination Via Campesina Germany)

Bund Ökologische Lebensmittelwirtschaft (IFOAM Germany)

Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland (Friends of the Earth Germany)

Gen-ethisches Netzwerk

GeneWatch UK

Gentechnikfreie Regionen in Deutschland (GMO-Free Regions in Germany)

Greenpeace Germany

Interessengemeinschaft für gentechnikfreie Saatgutarbeit (Initiative for GE-free Seeds and Breeding)

Naturschutzbund Deutschland (BirdLife Germany)

Save Our Seeds

Zukunftsstiftung Landwirtschaft