

Member States must reject all attempts to loosen GMO approvals

Rome, 22/06/2010 – “GMO-free farmers, processors and consumers in all EU Member States need the guaranteed right for GMO-free food and farming. A new possibility for Member States to ban GMOs under certain conditions can only be a bluff package if it comes with the attempt to persuade Member States to vote in favour of GMOs in approval procedures,” comments *Christopher Stopes*, President of the IFOAM EU Group¹, on a leaked draft Communication² of the EU Commission.

“We urge the Member States to reject these proposals. While Member States last year demanded the possibility to ban GMOs on their territory, this proposal appears to be a fake. While Commissioner Dalli claims full flexibility for Member States, the actual proposals do not give any legal certainty on how Member States can justify bans,” warns *Thomas Dosch*, representing farmer’s groups in the board of the IFOAM EU group. “In its Explanatory Memorandum, the EU Commission clearly shows that the present proposals aim to satisfy GMO-critical Member States with the promise to create a new possibility to ban GMO cultivation on their territory in exchange for being more open to adopt a ‘*more positive stance*’ in authorisation procedures for GMOs on EU level.”

“We welcome that the Commission finally recognises in its communication the economic interest of organic and other food producers to stay GMO-free. But keeping GMO out of the whole GMO-free conventional and organic food chain is not only a necessary undertaking to react to consumers’ demand for GMO-free food, but is also a legal requirement. There is no right to contaminate!” says *Bavo van den Idsert*, representing organic food processors in the IFOAM EU Group’s board. “In some Member States such as Spain, GMO-free production of maize is not possible anymore due to contamination with GMOs. The Commission must finally propose EU-wide, legally-binding rules to implement the right to remain GMO-free. Until such a regime is in force we are asking for an EU wide moratorium on GMOs!”

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Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

NOTES:

- (1) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.
- (2) The Commission is expected to publish a Commission Communication "on the freedom for Member States to decide on the cultivation of GMO", together with a draft for a non-legally binding recommendation on co-existence guidelines and a proposal for the modification of the Directive on the deliberate release into the environment of GMOs (EC 2001/18) on 13 July.