

OPEN LETTER TO COMMISSIONER DALLI, COMMISSIONER CIOLOȘ AND COMMISSIONER POTOČNIK



European Coordination Via Campesina

Rue de la Sablonniere 18,

Brussels 1000

Dear Commissioner Dalli, Commissioner Ciolos and Commissioner Potočnik,

The European Coordination Via Campesina is dismayed at the proposal of the European Commission to restructure decision making processes between the EU and member states which will result in more GM crops being grown and used in Europe.

The proposal of the commission – to allow countries to implement strict legislation on coexistence between GM and non-GM crops, effectively facilitating the wishes of countries to “ban” GM crops in their territories – is a simple attempt to make it easier for states to approve GMOs, bypassing the current impasse in the decision making process in Europe.

European citizens do not want GM crops or foods. This has been reiterated on various occasions to the council by the negative votes of numerous governments. The commission is now attempting to fragment opposition to GM crops at an EU level.

Such a policy on such a contentious issue is simply unacceptable. The EU's single market should not be held hostage by genotech corporations – how will one country be able to prohibit farmers from buying and growing GM seeds which are legally for sale and freely circulating on the single market, while other farmers in neighbouring countries grow the same crops without restriction? No member state will be able to resist pressure from the contestation of the WTO for long if it is not supported by the EU.

A "renationalization" of decision-making on GMOs will create huge difficulties in competition law and the single market – and will threaten the coherence of the European Union. If the EU wishes to cease meeting it's WTO commitments and permit Europe to develop agricultural policies based on social justice and Food Sovereignty, we congratulate it – but not when the only beneficiaries are transnational chemical and seed corporations.

Changes in the processes of evaluation and authorization currently in force in Europe are certainly necessary, but only in order to improve and reinforce existing mechanisms, not weaken them.

Given that:

- GM agriculture and GM-free agriculture cannot coexist
- GM agriculture causes huge biodiversity loss
- There is a strong influence of transnational corporations in the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) leading to a failure of its mandate to properly assess the impacts of GMOs
- The Commission has repeatedly ignored its own regulations requiring socio-economic, ethical and other related assessments¹
- Biotechnology and GMOs are not necessary in order to feed the world's population²

The European Commission, as opposed to facilitating market access for the the biotechnology and seed industries, should instead support the wealth and history of biodiversity developed and nurtured by farmers in Europe for the last 800 years.

We ask that the European Commission reconsiders its proposition, and call for:

- A permanent EU-wide ban on the cultivation and import of GMO crops and seeds
- Support for the development of plant varieties selected without genetic manipulation to protect European biodiversity
- A permanent ban on all forms of patents on genes on plants and animals
- EU funding to support Farmer's Rights as required in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Yours respectfully,

Josie Riffaud

Pierre Andre Tombez

European Coordination Via Campesina

¹ As EC Regulation 178/2002 states: "It is recognised that scientific risk assessment alone cannot, in some cases provide all the information on which a risk management decision should be based, and that other factors relevant to the matter under consideration should legitimately be taken into account including societal, economic, traditional, ethical and environmental factors and the feasibility of controls"

² IAASTD Report