

Letter and voting list to MEPs from:

COAG (Spanish Farmers' Organisation)
CPE (European Farmers' Network)
EEB (European Environmental Bureau)
Friends of the Earth Europe
Greenpeace
GM-free Ireland Network
IFOAM EU Group (Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements)
Save our Seeds Network

Brussels, Thursday January 18th 2007

Dear MEP,

Next week you will vote at the Agriculture Committee, on the Resolution "Agriculture and Biotechnology: Prospects and Challenges for Agriculture in Europe" (2006/2059(INI)).

2007 is a very important year for biotechnology as the EU reviews its 2002 Biotech Strategy (mid-term review of the EU Biotech Strategy). The European Commission will propose new targets for biotechnology, including genetically modified food and crops, in April 2007 when it issues a Communication to the Council and to the Parliament. These new targets are expected to be adopted by Ministers at the Competitiveness Council at the end of June.

Your vote next Wednesday will indicate to European citizens, to the rest of the European Parliament and to the European Commission, yours and other Agriculture Committee MEPs' position on genetically modified food and crops.

As you know, a large proportion of European citizens are opposed to GMOs in food and crops. The most recent Eurobarometer study (Gaskell et al., June 2006) reports that the majority of Europeans continue to think that GM food "should not be encouraged", and the survey concludes that "GM food is seen by them as not being useful, as morally unacceptable and as a risk for society". The survey also reports that Europeans are not against technology or research per se: "resistance to GM food is the exception rather than the rule. There is no evidence that opposition to GM food is a manifestation of a wider disenchantment with science and technology in general."

The current draft Resolution takes a one-sided view of the role of biotechnology in agriculture. Indeed, a large number of amendments (190), most of which query or contradict Mr Virrankoski's statements, have been proposed by MEPs from different political parties.

The draft text is based on unsubstantiated statements and relies on questionable data. We attach, for your information a short briefing which provides research results outlining the flaws in the current Resolution. Given the poor quality of the text, the undersigned farmers' groups and environmental organisations are of the opinion that the Resolution should be withdrawn, and that any EP text on agriculture and biotechnology should more accurately represent scientific uncertainty, current global impact of GM crops and public opinion.

As mentioned above, a key Commission Communication on the EU Biotech Strategy will be issued this Spring. By commenting now, the Agriculture Committee and the Parliament as a whole, essentially forfeit the possibility to react to the European Commission's proposals for new targets on agriculture and biotechnology. For this reason, we believe that, in addition to the objections outlined above, this Resolution is premature.

Furthermore, if the European Parliament were to adopt a Resolution expressing views contrary to the wishes of EU citizens, this will not reflect well on initiatives to stimulate public participation and ownership of the European project. GMOs are an issue about which the European public cares deeply and we urge you to bear this in mind when you vote on Wednesday.

Given that voting on individual amendments will go ahead on the 24th, we have listed below the amendments which we would strongly urge you to support, as well as a few which we feel should be clearly rejected. These votes will take place before the final vote for which we recommend outright rejection of the resolution, even if amended.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information,

Yours sincerely,

Susanna Gaoma Saez, COAG (Spanish Farmers' Organisation)
Olivier Keller, CPE (European Farmers' Network)
Mauro Albrizio, EEB (European Environment Bureau)
Helen Holder, Friends of the Earth Europe
Marco Contiero, Greenpeace
Michael O'Callaghan, GM-free Ireland Network
Marco Schlueter, IFOAM EU Group (Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements)
Benedikt Haerlin, Save our Seeds Network

VOTING LIST

Please see below for a list of amendments that we strongly urge you to support and those for which we urge you to reject. These votes will take place before the final vote in plenary, for which we recommend outright rejection of the resolution, even if amended.

AMENDMENTS TO SUPPORT:

2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17-18-19, 22, 24, 28, 30, 32, 42-43-44-45, 47,
51-52, 62, 70, 75, 78, 83, 87, 92, 94-95-96, 101, 103, 106, 107,
108-109-110-111, 116, 117, 122, 125, 127-128, 133, 136, 137, 144, 147,
157, 158, 159, 161, 164, 165, 168, 171-172, 182, 185, 186, 190.

AMENDMENTS TO REJECT:

16, 46, 50, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59, 68, 77, 89, 90, 91, 93, 126, 138, 149,
160, 163, 169, 170, 177

Briefing attached:
Agricultural biotechnology: yield, competitiveness, jobs and
environmental impact
Input to Resolution 2006/2059(INI)

--

Helen Holder
European GMO campaign coordinator

Friends of the Earth Europe
Rue Blanche 15
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: +322 542 01 82
Fax: +322 537 55 96
Helen.Holder@foeeurope.org
www.foeeurope.org