



Ohrid has been declared second GMO free zone in Macedonia

On 15.11.2007 the Council of the Ohrid declared the Municipality of Ohrid as a GMO free zone. Read more on

<http://www.ohrid.gov.mk/szgmo.pdf> (in Macedonian)

3 million Italians signed the petition against GM food

Italy: More than 3 million Italians have signed a petition calling for Italy to ban all genetically modified foods, an alliance of food producers, consumers and environmental groups said on Tuesday.

Campaigners collected signatures at marketplaces and food fairs across the country over the last few months and hope the government will respond by banning all imports and cultivation of what they consider "Frankenstein foods."

"We gathered 3,086,524 votes, of which 3,068,958 (99.43%) were in favour of banning GMOs and 17,566 (0.57%) said no," said a spokesman for the campaign group "Italy Europe - Free from Genetic Modification."

Italy does not allow the cultivation of GM plants but imports GMOs as animal feed. European consumers have expressed concern that genetically-modified crops might increase health risks, or pose threats to the natural environment.

Two weeks ago, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said he would suspend cultivation of GMOs, part of Europe's continued scepticism towards crops that have been genetically altered, for example to enhance yields or make them resistant to pesticides. The petition invited Italians to sign forms designed to resemble ballot papers, asking them to answer "yes" or "no" to whether food production should be "genuine ... founded on biodiversity and free from GMOs."

The EU's resistance to GMOs over recent years has caused trade disputes with major grain exporters, like the United States, which believe Europe has used consumer concerns over the technology as an excuse to block trade.

Farmers and scientists decry entry of GM rice

At a press conference at Quezon City, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) and the Asian Peasant Coalition (APC) decried the increased entry of GM rice such as LL601 and LL Rice 62 into the country in U.S. rice products and the depletion of traditional rice varieties. The groups presented thousands of signatures of people aiming to protect rice culture. According to Danilo 'Ka Daning Ramos, secretary general of KMP and APC, "This is the sorry state of our Rice industry now and it is all because of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), an institution which is mainly to blame for the deterioration of our country's rice culture."

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3D8495>

Supermarket giant speaks out against GM crops

Australian supermarket giant Coles has joined the organic industry in speaking out against GM food as some state governments appear closer to lifting of their bans on the commercial growing of GM food crops. Coles representative Chris Mara stated, "Coles listens to our customers and over 90 per cent do not want GM ingredients in their food and Coles' whole private label range... exclude all GM ingredients in response to customer concerns." The statement follows similar sentiments from Goodman Fielder, Australia's largest food company, Tatiara Meats, Australia's largest lamb exporter, and 250 other food companies who are calling on Australia's state governments to extend their bans of GM food crops.

COMMENT from Louise Sales: "It is blatantly clear that the food industry doesn't want GE food in their food supply chain and according to recent polls neither do the majority of consumers, farmers or our key export markets in Japan and Europe. Why is the Victorian government so determined to lift the bans? The only other stakeholder that appears to want GE food crops is the biotechnology industry which stands to make a fortune at everyone else's expense if this dangerous, unwanted technology is introduced."

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3D8518>

India's supreme court issues notice to govt on imported GM food

The Supreme Court has issued notice to the central government of India on a petition challenging a notification that allows import of GM processed food without any regulatory checks and exempts them from compulsory labelling.

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3D8509>

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3D8526>

France bans use of GM seeds

France has formally suspended the commercial use of GM seeds in the country until early February and ordered a biotech safety study.

<http://www.gmwatch.org/archive2.asp?arcid=3D8585>

Map of GMO areas in France / Carte des surfaces OGM en France

According to the figures published by the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 19 815 ha of GM maize have been planted in France in 2007. Greenpeace has recently published a map showing the GM areas in France:

<http://www.greenpeace.org/raw/content/france/press/reports/carte-des-surfaces-OGM.pdf>

Poland to Be GMO-Free

Poland should be a GMO-free country, said new Polish Minister of Environment Maciej Nowicki during the press conference on December 6 2007. "I would like to continue the line of the previous Minister of Environment Jana Szyszko with GMO free Poland in mind. My arguments are similar", stressed Mr. Nowicki. He added that Poland is not the only country in Europe that says no to GMO's.

Mr. Nowicki emphasized that humanity has started a very risky experiment on a large scale and we cannot predict the results of the experiments with GMOs. The precautionary principle should be a priority, he added.

The minister said that usually during discussion on GMOs he is asking GMO proponents whether Europe is suffering from hunger or having food surpluses. "If we were starving, we could think that we are taking a risk of having GM crops in order to avoid death by starvation. However we have food surpluses, so why get involved in experiments, whose consequences for humans and the environment are unpredictable at the moment?" - said Nowicki.

He reminded that other EU countries are resistant towards GMO crops. "There are two opposite forces in Europe regarding GMOS. I will be trying to convince those countries who are in favor of GMOs to change their position." he added.

The European Commission has warned Poland that two laws "on animal feed and seeds" break the EU regulations. According to the EU officials they ban introduction of new GM products into the Polish market. Since 2002 the Union law allows sales of some GM products in the entire European. Therefore Brussels started a disciplinary procedure against Poland. Regarding the seeds, Poland received a final warning several months ago. In August, the previous Polish government (Law and Justice party) said that it will not get rid of the ban.

Commissioner on environmental protection Stavros Dimas, who contrary to other commissioners did not agree to introduce genetically modified potato, now wants to stop growing of GM corn. He has received a lot of support from environmental organizations: in November they collected large number of signatures under the petition to that effect.

Within the European Commission are commissioners who are in favor of allowing GM crops in the European Union. According to unofficial information they are: commissioner on trade Peter Mandelson (from Great Britain), German commissioner on industry Guenter Verheugen and commissioner on science Janez Potocznik (from Slovenia).

They argue that lack of agreement on growing GM crops is in conflict with the principles of World Trade Organization (WTO), which can start procedure against the European Union. Several years ago USA, Canada and Argentina complained to WTO against the EU moratorium. European Commission lost the first case in 2004.

Moratorium ended in 2004 and since then the European Commission started procedures that would gradually allow several GM products. Until recently it was boiling down to the import of already harvested products such as corn, and not to grow GM corn. For the most part the European Union is a GMO free with a few exceptions such as the fields of MON810 maize, which were started even before the 1998 moratorium. Spain is a leader here (with about 70 thousand hectares) but some small amounts of GM MON810 maize is grown in France and Czech Republic.

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Happy holidays!
Среќни празници!