



*Press Release*

**Europe fails to comply with WTO ruling on biotech crops**

**Brussels, January 15, 2008:**

Today, the US government confirmed that they would be taking the necessary steps under WTO rules to preserve their right to suspend trade concessions with the EU for failing to comply with the WTO ruling on biotech crops. The EU was originally given a Nov. 21, 2007 deadline to comply with the WTO dispute settlement panel's ruling. In November, the United States and the EU agreed to an extension of the reasonable period of time (RPT) for compliance to Jan. 11, 2008.

EuropaBio, the EU Association for Bioindustries understands the US action to seek WTO sanctions against Europe for the unjustified non compliance with the WTO rules. The WTO panel report states that 1) EU Member States have not properly implemented the EU rules on biotech crops, 2) specific Member State bans must be lifted, 3) that the EU has not approved products in a timely manner because of 'undue delays' in assessing GMOs in most cases. In the past year only 4 products have been approved for import out of 47 pending dossiers. At this rate, it will last 10 – 12 years to clear the backlog, not including any new applications.

Biotech crops offer farmers a variety of technology options to increase yields, reduce spraying and fight pests. In 2006 the global biotech crop area reached 102 million hectares for the first time, with 10.3 million farmers planting biotech crops.

Also developing countries have started to embrace the technology with staggering adoption rates. For example, according to Indian government estimates, more than 2.5 million small scale farmers grew genetically modified cotton last year, with production quadrupling in less than three years.

In Europe, insect resistant Bt maize is the only biotech crop grown in the EU. In 2007, cultivation in eight EU Member States totalled 110 077 hectares, a 77% increase over the previous year.

"EU politicians should allow decisions to be based on science. EU farmers and consumers should be able to choose for themselves whether to use the technology and to share the economic and environmental benefits of it," says Nathalie Moll, Executive Director, EuropaBio. "It is regrettable that the EU Commission and its member states are not even in the position to implement their own legal rules. So the EU remains illegal in its GMO approach versus the rest of the world."

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**About EuropaBio**

EuropaBio is the European Association for Bioindustries, solely and uniquely bringing together bioscience companies from all fields of research and development, testing, manufacturing and distribution of biotechnology products. It has 84 corporate members operating worldwide, 8 associate members, 6 BioRegions and 25 national biotechnology associations representing some 1800 small and medium sized enterprises involved in research.

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