

PRESS RELEASE

Biotech Industry disappointed with ministers' agreement to renationalise decisions on GM crops cultivation

- Decision contrary to the spirit of the EU common market

Brussels – 12 June 2014

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, is disappointed by the agreement reached today by EU Environment ministers on the so-called 'nationalisation proposal' concerning GM crops cultivation. This deal shows the lack of willingness of the EU institutions and Member States to correctly implement the current regulatory framework for GMO approvals they had decided upon themselves.

"To renationalise a common EU policy, based on non-objective grounds, is a negative precedent and contrary to the spirit of the single market," said André Goig, Chair of EuropaBio. "In particular, it would allow Member States to formally reject a technology on non-scientific grounds, which sets a dangerous precedent and sends a negative signal for innovative industries considering whether or not to operate in Europe," added Mr Goig. "In the end it should be up to farmers to decide what they want to plant in their fields."

The EU legal framework for the cultivation of GM products, initially adopted in 2001 (Directive 2001/18/EC), has never been correctly implemented. GM products for cultivation are regularly not put to Member States for a vote as required by law. EuropaBio reiterates its call for products that fulfil the EU's science-based risk assessment requirements as set out in the EU legislation to be authorized without undue delay. After more than 15 years of large scale GMO cultivation in many countries globally, existing evidence has shown that GM crops are at least as safe as their conventional counterparts.

The biotech industry firmly believes that failing to support the EU's own best science is the single most damaging element for growth, innovation, investment climate and, indeed, consumer confidence. Decision makers should now focus on finding a solution to the testing and sampling issue involving traces of GMOs in seeds (as repeatedly requested by the Member States since 2006) and in food, as this represents an economic loss for a wide range of operators and threatens trade flows of commodities on which the EU heavily depends.

Both Belgium and Luxembourg abstained from the vote.

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