



EU Parliament vote highlights need to build trust in risk assessment

PRESS RELEASE

11 December 2018, Brussels:

Responding to today's EU Parliamentary plenary vote on a legislative proposal for a regulation on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, Joanna Dupont-Inglis, Secretary General of EuropaBio, said: *"Today's vote highlights the need for building much needed trust in our food risk assessment system. Although Europe already has one of the most rigorous and robust risk assessment procedures in the world, the current system is not delivering benefits as transparently or efficiently as it could. Whilst we remain very concerned about a lack of sufficient safeguards to protect confidential business information, we welcome efforts to increase efficiency through pre-submission meetings and reinforce risk communications, to improve the sustainability of our risk assessment system in the long term."*

For many years, EuropaBio has been calling for improvements in the EU's food chain risk assessment process for GMOs. The current process, which is conducted by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), is lengthy and costly, compared to other risk assessment agencies like the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Procedural inefficiencies within EFSA, coupled with insufficient efforts in the area of risk communications, have only contributed towards a lack of confidence in assessed products, despite the fact that these take several years to approve and cost millions of euros of both public and private money. Despite a 20-year history of safe commercialisation around the world, and over 2,500 separate authorisations granted by public authorities in at least 59 countries, some interest groups continue to campaign vigorously against GM crops, routinely making unsubstantiated claims against their safety.

Concluding her statement, Dupont-Inglis said: *"In future, we would like to see a greater degree of transparency in the rules of procedure for risk assessment, as well as from the Member States, when it comes to whether or not they vote with, or against, the scientific evidence assessing product safety. Disclosure of technical information, on its own, is unlikely to improve the public understanding of science or the trust in the risk assessment process. Improved risk communication should do more to highlight the integrity and quality of EFSA's scientific opinions in an understandable manner, and to address the generation and spread of misinformation and conspiracy theories, that have eroded trust in some innovative, beneficial products like GMOs. Furthermore, we support provisions that improve efficiency and ensure respect for the protection of animals. Looking forward, we hope that the Parliament, together with the Commission and Council, will make progress towards seeking a proportionate and balanced agreement that protects legitimate business interests and will enable innovation with benefits for EU consumers."*

For additional information of relevance, please consult:

- European Parliament press release: [Food safety: more transparency, better risk prevention](#)
- EuropaBio [position paper](#) on transparency and sustainability of EU risk assessment (also available in [Italian](#), [Spanish](#), [French](#) and [German](#))

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About EuropaBio

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, promotes an innovative and dynamic European biotechnology industry. EuropaBio and its members are committed to the socially responsible use of biotechnology to improve quality of life, to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure diseases, to improve the quality and quantity of food and feedstuffs and to move towards a biobased and zero-waste economy. EuropaBio represents 75 corporate members and 17 national biotechnology associations and bioregions.

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