



Brussels, 4 March 2009

Mr José Manuel Durão Barroso
President of the European Commission

Dear Mr President,

We write to you regarding the decisions of the 2 March 2009 Environment Council and the forthcoming decisions concerning GMOs, as we are very concerned about the manner in which you are trying to force through the authorisation of highly controversial genetically modified plant varieties in the EU.

Last Monday, the Council rejected by qualified majority the proposal to lift the bans in Hungary and Austria on the authorisation of the GMO maize variety MON810. On two previous occasions (2006 and 2007), when asking for lifting of bans, you have received similar signals of caution from a majority of Member States based on qualified doubts about impacts of the cultivation of GMO varieties on public health, biodiversity and farming.

Instead of taking these concerns seriously, you have chosen to increase pressure in order to promote the cultivation of GMOs in the EU- against clear opposition from the majority of citizens, against the objections of your own competent Commissioner colleagues and against serious doubts repeatedly expressed by a substantial number of ministers of environment of EU Member States.

We are especially concerned about the "Sherpa group" that you initiated in order to hold informal discussions on how to accelerate GM approvals, which is highly untransparent and undemocratic. You claim as justification for your pro GMO-policies, that the ruling of the World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement panel against EU legislation on GMOs had questioned the right of EU member states to ban GMOs - which simply is incorrect.

In the light of these concerns, we would like to ask you to ensure the implementation of the Council decisions of December 2008, where, for example, Member States have unanimously underlined the right of Member States to prohibit GMO cultivation on the grounds of specific regional conditions. In order to underline our request, we will send a letter to the Presidents of the European Parliament political groups, asking them to support a motion of censure against the Commission at the upcoming March II Plenary session if the Commission does not initiate the measures, or agrees to a politically binding commitment of implementation of the points mentioned below.

We hope that we will be able to work productively with you on this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Cohn Bendit
Co-President
Greens/EFA Group

Monica Frassoni
Co-President
Greens/EFA Group

The President of the Commission should have given by then a politically binding commitment of implementation that:

- No further authorisations of the cultivation of GMOs will be proposed, including Bt11 (Syngenta) and 1507 (Dupont/ Pioneer), Amflora (BASF) before these varieties fully comply with the criteria mentioned below;
- In the near future, a proposal for the long awaited risk assessment and, based on this, a proposal for approval or rejection of a new authorisation of MON810 for cultivation will be presented;
- No measures against Member States shall be proposed forcing them to authorise GMOs until the risk assessment mentioned below has been carried out;
- The Parliament shall be informed about advisory and lobbying activities of concerned industries including specifically Europabio and other relevant parties interested in the promotion of GMO cultivation in the EU.

The President of the Commission shall initiate the following, or agree to a politically binding commitment to implement the December 2008 Council decisions including:

- An appraisal and a comprehensive list of specific regional agronomical and environmental conditions with respect to the potential cultivation of a GMO within the European Union, including suggestions for specific risk management measures to protect them (see paragraphs 1 and 16 of the Council Conclusions on GMOs of 4 Dec 2008);
- The assessment of the long-term risks as part of any proposal for cultivation (3). An overview, including a list, on the availability of independent studies (i.e. neither conducted nor financed by the applicant) on the risk and properties of a specific GMO as part of any proposal for cultivation or use as food and feed (paragraphs 10, 11);
- The assessment of environmental consequences of cultivation of specific GMOs with respect to their own pesticidal properties as well as changed agricultural practices regarding the use of certain pesticides where GMOs are resistant to such pesticides in accordance with Directive 91/414 as part of any proposals for cultivation (paragraph 4)
- The assessment of socio-economic implications of proposed approvals for cultivation (paragraph 7);
- The critical appraisal of the composition of the scientific committee of EFSA, reflecting the Council decision of December 2008;